University of Alberta

Critical Filmmaking in Ireland and Québec After 1960

by

Gerald Stephen WHITE ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Critical Filmmaking in Ireland and Québec after 1960 examines a group of filmmakers who are both politically engaged and highly critical of their own cultures, and who draw upon a wide variety of formal strategies. These filmmakers also share a scepticism of formal and political convention; they express this scepticism through moderate strategies, never embracing cinematic clarity or certain nationalist assumptions, but never entirely rejecting them either.

This analysis begins with an introduction that considers theoretical, historical, institutional, and policy-centred comparisons. Its first and last chapters consider Jean-Pierre Lefebvre and Margo Harkin, respectively; these chapters explain why aspects of their work illuminate various aspects of *both* Québec and Irish cinema. The remaining chapters are filmmaker comparisons: Pierre Perrault with Bob Quinn, Jacques Godbout with John T. Davis, Michel Brault with Pat Murphy and John Davies, the early Denys Arcand with Cathal Black, and the later Denys Arcand with Neil Jordan. The work concludes with an assessment of the younger generation of filmmakers in Québec and Ireland, and tries to place their work in the context of critical filmmaking and of recent debates about globalisation's and European unification's effect on cinema. The analysis draws upon films and secondary literature in English, French and Irish Gaelic.

The focus here is mostly on non-mainstream forms: elliptical narratives, ethnographic work, essay films, counter-cinema, and political documentary. Narrative films such as *Michael Collins*, *The Crying Game*, *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*, *Jésus de Montréal*, and *Hush-A-Bye-Baby*, are also examined.

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Acknowledgements in academic works are notoriously long-winded and self-indulgent. I promise to uphold this high standard here.

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Bits of this material have appeared elsewhere. Chapter four appeared as "*Maeve* and *Les Ordres*: Counter-Cinema in Ireland and Québec," *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies / Revue canadienne d'études irlandaises* 26:2 / 27:1 (Fall/Spring 2000/2001), pp. 89-103. Chapter two is forthcoming in *Cinema Journal*. Thanks to the editors of those publications, Michael Kenneally and Frank Tomasulo, respectively, for their support.

The Canadian Association for Irish Studies was the first Canadian conference I ever attended, and it has been my intellectual and professional home since. I feel like my work on this dissertation really began when Margo Harkin and Bob Quinn came to the Edmonton conference in 2000. I particularly thank Cecil Houston and Jean Talman for their leadership and their guidance.

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Introduction

Both Ireland and Québec have highly diversified, fully evolved national cinemas, and both have been the subject of more than one dedicated study. But a comparison of a certain strand of these two cinemas can show something quite different from what comes from more standard narrative histories. What I want to do in this work here is explain how the critical film making that has emerged in both countries has embraced a spirit of moderation, and in so doing has stretched the boundaries of what can be done in small national cinemas. My focus will be mostly on documentary and fiction filmmakers, filmmakers that operate towards the edges or entirely outside of a traditional commercial framework. My focus will also be on filmmakers who display a sense of restlessness – both with formal convention and prevailing ideology – but who manifest this restlessness not through outright rejection but through careful, rigorous critique and negotiation. The filmmakers I discuss here are mostly nationalists who criticise conventional notions of national identity, documentarians who complicate notions of "truth" or "realism," and narrative filmmakers for whom narrative clarity and linearity are often secondary considerations.

My discussion will be organised along thematic and formal lines. The first and last chapters deal with a single filmmaker from Québec and Ireland, respectively, whose films illuminate important themes and conflicts in *both* national cinemas. But the rest of the work is given over to filmmaker comparisons, comparisons which seek to examine the ways that various forms can be subverted and re-organised in the service of critical ends. Chapter two deals with the ethnographic documentary, chapter three with the essay-film, chapter four with counter-cinema, chapter five with semi-independent and essentially non-commercial narrative film, and chapter six with more straightforwardly narrative and semi-commercial work. What I hope to do with these comparisons is explain how a body of (often little-seen) film has clearly shifted the idea of "critical cinema" away from the fringe occupied by a kind of avant garde practice that is more important to the cinema of the United States (as with filmmakers like Stan Brakhage), English-Canada (as with filmmakers like Michael Snow or Joyce Wieland) or England (as with filmmakers like Paul Sharits or the team of Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen), and towards a practice that is more ideologically and aesthetically nuanced.

What I want to do in this introduction is sketch out some of the historical, theoretical, and institutional issues that will be relevant to the work as a whole. As cultures, Québec and Ireland do seem to me remarkably similar – both in broadly historical and in cinematic terms – but there are a number of crucial differences that also necessitate discussion. By explaining the struggles around colonialism, modernity and language that characterise both Québec and Ireland, I will show how both places are marked by unresolved historical and political issues that are often a subtext of both the development of cinematic infrastructure and of the films themselves. And by explaining the way that various theoretical models important to Cultural Studies generally and Film Studies in particular (postcolonialism, regionalism, work around national cinema) do and do not work, I will show how the spirit of compromise and conflict that define Irish and Québec cinema demand a theoretical approach that is broadly comparative.

Finally, I will show how the development of film in Québec and Ireland began under very different circumstances and drew upon very different forms, but eventually converged on a model that is somewhere between non-commercial/semi-governmental and semi-commercial, a convergence that illustrates the general tendency of these cinemas towards moderation and away from easily-explained (or easily-theorised) poles.

I. History and Politics

The intersections between Irish and Québec history, when they have been discussed at all, often centre on the narrative of immigration.[1] While there can be no doubt that Irish immigration is a crucial part of Québec's development as a society, that is not the sort of comparative work I am undertaking here (I know of no Irish heritage on the part of any of the Québec filmmakers I discuss in this work; outside of some educational documentaries, the only film I know of that explicitly deals with the Irish in Québec is Irvin Kershner's 1964 adaptation of Brian Moore's novel *The Luck of Ginger Coffey*, and I do not deal with it here). Rather, it is my contention that Ireland and Québec as societies share certain historical and cultural elements which make the similarities in their cinemas seem almost inevitable. These include a shared (although not identical) relationship with British colonialism, a Catholicism that has not only been dominant in everyday life but which is also similarly rigid; certain geographical similarities (islands, as we will see, are important to both cultures); and a shared (again, though, not identical) fascination with the United States. But there are some crucial differences too. The presence of a very violent and nominally successful separatist movement in Ireland is one (I refer here to the creation of the Republic of Ireland, not the ongoing struggle in Northern Ireland). The absence in Ireland of a distinct period of modernisation that could compare with Québec's Quiet Revolution is another. And while the politics of language are ever-present in both countries, a very different set of cultural tensions are actually at play. While I will argue that a similar cinematic infrastructure will make a comparison of these two national cinemas particularly relevant, the numerous points of cultural, social and political contact between Québec and Ireland make a comparison between the two cultures seem to me like an entirely natural, instinctive endeavour.

I used to joke that I was going to call this work *Mad at the English: Film in Ireland and Québec.* As you can see from the title page I changed my mind, but a hint of regret remains; both Irish and Québec culture are over-determined by a relationship with England, specifically with British colonialism,[2] that has some very negative elements. A meaningful discussion of the remnants of British colonialism in Ireland and Québec is the proper subject of a monograph of its own, but I do think that it is useful to keep in mind a few general tendencies. While the relationship between the UK and the Republic of Ireland, or even the UK and Québec, very rarely erupts into acrimony (and on the political level is these days more often given over to the creation of trade relationships), the relationship between Northern Ireland and the UK remains very violent indeed, and the memory in both Ireland and Québec of a similar kind of violence is not so old as to be erased from the culture. Legacies of Ireland's War of Independence

(1919-1921), the Patriotes' rebellion in Lower Canada (1837-38), or the "October Crisis" (1970) where Pierre Trudeau declared martial law to deal with the Front de liberation du Québec (FLQ)'s campaign of bombing and kidnapping, all continue to affect these cultures in significant ways. And there is a very long history of social exclusion and domestic discrimination that is only beginning to be resolved; it is not so long ago that Francophones were discriminated against and denied services in French, and it is not so long ago that the Irish Catholics similarly formed a distinct underclass both in Ireland and in England, to which country many Irish people immigrated because of adverse economic conditions at home (and again, this is arguably still the case in Northern Ireland). While these kinds of issues are not often an explicit topic in the films that I discuss in this work, their legacy does remain. This is visible in the fascination with language in the films of Bob Quinn and Pierre Perrault (chapter two), the interest in colonialism and sectarianism that we see in John T. Davis and Jacques Godbout's films (chapter three), the anger over the violent quashing of nationalist violence in *Maeve* and *Les Ordres* (chapter four), the sense on the part of Denys Arcand and Cathal Black that the deck is stacked against the building of a modern, liberal state (chapter five), or the ambiguity around politics that sets in once that goal has been achieved that we see in later Arcand and Neil Jordan (chapter six). The degree of explicit engagement with the experience of British colonialism varies widely in these films I discuss, but it seems to me present in one way or another throughout.

Defining a term like "modernity" is extremely difficult; it could certainly be all things to all people. For the purposes of the arguments in this work, I will be thinking of modernity and modernisation largely in terms defined by thinkers such as Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson. While both of them are theorists of nationalism, and I do not want to conflate nationalism with modernity, I find their thinking on the topic broad enough to be useful to a general set of problems. Anderson writes the following on the topic of modernity:

> Essentially, I have been arguing that the very possibility of imagining the nation only arose historically when, and where, three fundamental cultural conceptions, all of great antiquity, lost their axiomatic grip on men's minds. The first of these was the idea that a particular script-language offered privileged access to ontological truth, precisely because it was an inseparable part of that truth.... Second was the belief that society was naturally organized around and under high centres – monarchs who were persons apart from other human beings and who ruled by some form of cosmological (divine) dispensation.... Third was a conception of temporality in which cosmology and history were indistinguishable, the origins of the world and of men essentially identical....
>
> The slow, uneven decline of these interlinked certainties, first in Western Europe, later elsewhere, under the impact of economic change, "discoveries" (social and scientific), and the development of increasingly rapid communications, drove a harsh wedge between cosmology and history. No surprise, then, that the search was on, so to speak, to find for a new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together. (36)

This description is in basic agreement with Gellner's statement that "[t]his is the general profile of a modern society: literate, mobile, formally equal with a merely fluid, continuous, so to speak atomised inequality, and with a shared, homogenous, literacy-carried, and school-inculcated culture. It could hardly be more sharply contrasted with a traditional society, within which literacy was a minority and specialised accomplishment, where stable hierarchy rather than mobility was the norm, and culture was diversified and discontinuous, and in the main transmitted by local social groups rather than by special and centrally supervised educational agencies" (1987:15-16). These markers of modernity – replacement of religious domination with popular sovereignty, widespread literacy and the concomitant spread of a literary culture and eventually other kinds of locally-produced culture, the increasing influence of communication and the concomitant awareness of international realities, and, of course, the rise of national awareness, which both Gellner and Anderson argue is a seminally modern, *not* antiquated, idea – are all present in the films I will discuss, and their place in Irish and Québec culture, as I think we will see from these discussions, is not entirely resolved.

One crucial point of contact between the cultures of Québec and Ireland is the influence of Catholicism. To a great extent, this shared identity is what fostered alliances between Francophone Québécoises and Irish immigrants, for it is also what partially accounted for their marginalisation in countries controlled by a Protestant English monarchy. But the other shared point of contact is that both Irish and Québec versions of Catholicism were extremely strict, and both had a tendency to suppress revolutionary or separatist activity. It is a generally agreed upon point of Irish history that the Catholic Church in Ireland had a deeply contradictory role vis-à-vis the colonial struggle; it formed the basis of Irish identity, but it tended towards an authoritarianism that strongly condemned any form of insurrection, sometimes (although not always) including anti-colonial insurrection. There is a similar tension present in Québec Catholicism, which has certainly been a defining force in nationalism but has not contributed much to the search for self-determination. Katherine O'Sullivan See writes of Québec's Catholic Church that "until World War II, the strength of ecclesiastical authority in French Canada ensured that the enlightenment version of popular sovereignty through an individual adherence to a social contract and later Marxist ideas of class struggle would be rejected in favour of an ideology of the national spiritual mission of the Québécois" (31). That seems to me a very neat summary not only of the conditions that led to Québec's Quiet Revolution (on which more later), but of the way that Catholicism in both Québec and Ireland often appealed to nationalism's reactionary elements but very few of its potentially liberatory ones. Again, while Catholicism has not been an explicit theme for most of the filmmakers that I will discuss (the exceptions are mostly Irish, and include Bob Quinn's *The Bishop's Story*, Cathal Black's *Our Boys*, and Margo Harkin's *Hush-A-Bye-Baby*, although also includes Denys Arcand's *Jésus de Montréal*), we will see much discussion of the modernity-related problems that the domination of Catholicism presents, such as the creation of a liberal, secular culture, something that almost all of the filmmakers I discuss in this work are concerned with.

See goes on to write in her description of Québec Catholicism that "[o]nly when the secularization and bureaucratization of the welfare state eroded the clerical power and influence did intellectuals successfully replace this romantic nativism with a more secular version of self-determination" (31); what she is describing here is the Quiet Revolution, a period that is in one way or another a crucial concern for most of the Québec filmmakers I will discuss, but which has no Irish equivalent. This is one crucial difference between these two cultures; Québec has emerged definitively into the realm of the liberal/secular, while Ireland has almost slouched towards that state (State?), and is still carrying a lot of baggage from its own *grande noirceur*, as Duplessis-era Québec is known and the history of the Free State of Ireland could possibly be called.[3] Some of this baggage includes a rigid notion of gender roles and equation of macho posturing with nationalist righteousness (the subject of both *Maeve*, the subject of chapter four, and to a certain extent of *Hush-A-Bye-Baby*, the subject of chapter seven), and a general sense that social policy is being determined by followers of the most conservative elements of Catholic social thought. *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* gets a lot of its dramatic tension from the 1984 referendum held in the Republic of Ireland on whether to uphold the constitutional ban on abortion (which it did; the procedure remains illegal there, although another referendum is scheduled for March 2002); such a referendum and such division would be unthinkable in contemporary Québec. The same is true for the referendum on divorce that similarly polarised the Republic in 1995; that time forces of liberalisation won and divorce was made legal (although by only 50.28% to 49.72% – shades of the 1995 Québec referendum on sovereignty!), but it is unimaginable that such a socio-political struggle would need to take place in Québec in the 1990s. While I basically agree with Declan Kiberd's assessment that "it would hardly be too much to say that the Irish, despite their reputation, are one of the least conservative peoples of Europe, to judge by the rate at which they have changed over the past century and a half" (645-6), it seems equally clear that certain aspects of the culture have moved into modernity faster than others. This has created a somewhat different cultural climate in Ireland and Québec, one that I will strive to take into account throughout this work.

The political situations in Ireland and Québec, however, are also very different, and I think present a similar disjuncture. For while Québec has been gripped with periodic bursts of separatist political activity since the mid 1960s (the rise and fall of a number of separatist governments, a referendum in 1980 that failed 60-40, another in 1995 that failed by less than one half of one percent), it remains part of Canada. Ireland, on the other hand, made a more-or-less definitive break from the United Kingdom in 1921 with the end of the War of Independence. Even if this did at first create the partitioned Free State of Ireland, still a member of the Commonwealth with its parliament required to swear allegiance to the Crown, this was an independent country (one that remained neutral in WWII), and a fully independent Republic of Ireland was not far away anyway (nominally declared by the 1937 constitution, it was fully achieved in 1948). In political sovereignty terms, Québec remains several steps away from what Ireland has been for over half a century. Indeed, it remains to this day several steps away even from Home Rule, the strategy that a nervous English government tried to use at the beginning of the 20th century in order to appease Irish demands for self-determination; that strategy ended up being too little, too late. For Québec, it would still be exactly the opposite: more than they have even been offered. This kind of disparity has actually created some longing among Québec nationalists, notably Jacques Ferron, whose 1970 novel *Le Salut de* *l'Irlande* seemed to posit Ireland as what Québec had not yet become, as the nation that promised salvation for his *pays incertain*. When Ferron's young Connie Haffigan asks his Irish-Quebecker father C.D.A. (a political agent under Duplessis and sympathetic to the FLQ) "[q]u'est-ce que l'Irlande?" Ferron writes that "[À] ma question il bougonna qu'il avait déjà répondu, que l'Irlande était l'honneur de tous les humiliés du Canada" (53) [What is Ireland? ... To my question, he mumbled that he had already responded, that Ireland was the honour of all the humiliated of Canada]. The simple legitimacy of the separatist project is a constant argument in Canadian and Québec politics, and it is a question that dogs a number of the Québec films under discussion here. But that legitimacy was established long ago in Ireland, and it is fully settled; not even the staunchest Northern Unionists doubt the legitimacy of the existence of a fully independent Republic of Ireland, even though they may be resentful of its designs on their loyalty or what they view as their territory. That kind of clarity has yet to be achieved by those interested in an independent Québec (and that failure could certainly be seen as a humiliation, as it is for Ferron), or even by those who want to think of Québec as a country that happens to be part of a larger state formation (along the lines, say, of Scotland's relation to the UK or the Faroe Islands' relationship to Denmark).

Both Ireland and Québec have unresolved questions around language, although these problems have unfolded in very different ways. Québec's Bill 101, introduced in 1977, made French the official language of the province, marking the culmination of a long push against the fact that English, even though it is not spoken as a first language by a majority of the population of Québec, had long been seen as the language of success, in contrast to French, long seen as the grubby, embattled language of the unwashed majority. This legislation, then, was essentially an inscription of the linguistic facts "on the ground" (*The Reconquest of Montréal* is the title of a 1991 book by Marc Levine about Bill 101); a majority of the population of Québec speaks French as a first language, so it became the official language of the province. This is not the case with Article 8 of the Irish Republic's constitution, which declares Irish Gaelic (hereafter "Irish"[4]) to be the *first* language of the Republic, whereas English is recognised in Article 8.2 as "a second official language."[5] This has not represented the facts "on the ground" since the mid-19th century.

While Irish was until then the genuine majority language on the island of Ireland,[6] one of the repercussions of the 1801 Act of Union was a desire on the part of the London government to unify the two islands politically and culturally, and the wiping out of the Irish language, through schooling and through "translation" of monuments and place-names from Irish names into English gobbledygook (Dún na nGall, or "Fortress of the Foreigner," into Donegal, etc.), was part of this (and is the subject of Brian Friel's 1980 play *Translations*). One of the major priorities of the early Free State government was the revival of Irish, which it promptly made mandatory in schools and a requirement for employment in the civil service. The fervour and poor pedagogy with which they and succeeding governments and governmental agencies approached the task led, all too predictably, to a considerable backlash on the part of much of the population of Free State and, later, the Republic. As a result, the language is often linked with a narrow-minded nostalgic nationalism, and much of the Irish intelligentsia regards those interested in the language with considerable suspicion. And even though literally *every* person schooled in the Republic has had *twelve years* of mandatory instruction in Irish, many people cannot put together a sentence, let alone hold down a conversation (until recently, conversational Irish was not part of the pedagogical picture; it was taught like Latin). About 30% of the Republic claims knowledge of the language, but only about 1% of the Republic of Ireland currently speaks Irish as an authentic first language. James McCloskey writes that "Irish has perhaps 20,000 to 30,000 native speakers among whom are reasonably large numbers of young people. In addition, it has perhaps 100,000 people who use the language regularly in their daily routines" (45). Most of these native speakers are concentrated in Gaeltacht areas, areas identified by the government of the Republic as at least 80% Irish-speaking and subsidised with the goal of keeping them that way. The biggest of these regions is in Connemara (also known as Conamara, part of county Galway), although there is also a significant Gaeltacht in County Donegal (the Republic's northernmost county, known by Irish speakers as Tír Connail); all of these Gaeltacht areas, anyway, are rural.

It is clear, then, that despite certain legislative affinities, the situation of Irish in Ireland is not really comparable to the situation of French in Québec. The latter is the authentic vernacular of the majority of the territory in question, the former is a highly embattled minority language, in better shape than some "small languages" (Scottish Gaelic for instance) but much worse off than others (Welsh, for instance, which is much more widely spoken in Wales). Indeed, if a Canadian equivalent is to be put forward, it is reasonable to say that the situation of Irish in Ireland is similar to the situation of French in Alberta or Saskatchewan, or of Cree in Alberta (Irish in Ireland is much stronger than Cree in Saskatchewan, much weaker than French in Ontario). This reality did not stop Éamon Ó Cuiv, then the Republic's Minister of Culture, the Gaeltacht and the Islands, from meeting with representatives of the Canadian government in May 2000 to seek advice on how to build an authentically bilingual country. Nor did it, however, manage to get him beyond Ottawa or Montréal, so how accurate a picture he could have gotten of French's role in Canada is highly questionable, if not laughable. Links to Canada's Aboriginal languages do not seem to have been discussed at all, and many Gaeltacht advocates are hard-pressed to agree that there is much affinity there. It is clear that the government of the Republic still insists on thinking of Irish as the *national* language, whatever socio-linguistic facts may argue against this; this insistence has kept the Republic from signing the European Charter on Minority Languages, because that charter identified Irish as a minority language (which it obviously is) and not a first national language (which it is constitutionally). James McCloskey's recent book *Guthanna in Éag: An mairfidh an ghaeilge beo? / Voices Silenced: Has Irish a future?* argues (in both Irish and English) that Irish is best considered as a "small language," similar in many ways to the Aboriginal languages of North America or Oceania, and that in this context, it is in relatively good shape. This kind of carefully contextualised optimism avoids both unrealistic insistences that Irish is or can be the first language of every

Irish person (which have to do more with national ego than with socio-linguistics) and cranky pessimism about Irish being a useless, dead language that only hicks and deluded romantics have anything to do with (which has more to do with Irish's history of being badly taught by brutalising Christian Brothers than it does with the legitimate role of a minority culture in the life of a hybridised, post-colonial State).[7]

These differences in language cut to a central difference in the contemporary manifestations of Irish and Québec nationalism: their status as former colonies. Describing the role of language in emergent nationalisms, Benedict Anderson writes that:

> Yet it is obvious that while today almost all modern self-conceived nations – and also nation-states – have "national print languages," many of them have these languages in common, and in others only a tiny fraction of the population "uses" the national language in conversation or on paper. The nation-states of Spanish America or those of the "Anglo-Saxon" family are conspicuous examples of the first outcome; many ex-colonial states, particularly in Africa, of the second. In other words, the concrete formation of contemporary nation-states is by no means isopomorphic with the determinate reach of particular print-languages.
> (46)

I think that Anderson could have well replaced "Spanish America" with "Québec" and "ex-colonial states, particularly in Africa" with "ex-colonial states, particularly Ireland." French certainly enjoys the status of a "national print language" in a way that seems entirely consistent with the situation of Spanish in, say, Bolivia or Ecuador (although these are straightforward nation-states, Québec seems safely categorised as a "self-conceived nation"). English, on the other hand, is a language that was imposed on Irish society by a colonising power, one that replaced the indigenous language (or languages, if one considers the case of Ulster-Scots) in the 19th century. This process was not too far off from what has come to pass in Nigeria or India, where English became the lingua franca that could unify disparate language groups (indigenous Irish speakers, Anglo-Irish, Northern Protestants, colonial settlers of more recent arrival), and partially because of this also became the language of government, education and commerce. To a certain extent this was also the case in 19th and early 20th century Québec, with English being in some ways the "official language" of Québec, or at least the language spoken by many of the ruling élites. And this "post-colonial" situation is no longer the case in Ireland, where the national print language is English (although most government documents must also be translated into Irish), which is also the language used by most of the population.

But this contrast in language history points to a larger difference in colonial history. It is possible to see Irish history as a very typical narrative of colonial domination, anti-colonial struggle, and a hybridised post-colonial present and future; this narrative is harder to square with Québec history, which is certainly connected to colonial patterns of domination, but which presents less clear-cut positions in terms of colonisers and indigenes. Indeed, if there is a colonial struggle in present-day Québec, it is with its Aboriginal population against the despoiling of is traditional territory (the controversy over the Hydro Québec project in James Bay is the central grievance here, although there are many others), its struggle for linguistic rights and preservation, and its collective desire to stay out of a possible independent Québec. The traditional blindness of

Québec sovereigntists to the national claims made right under their proverbial noses is a major compromising factor in any claim to anti-colonial struggle. Because of this disjuncture, I tend to avoid post-colonial theory in this thesis. While the appropriateness of post-colonial analysis in Irish Studies is beyond dispute,[8] its application to Québec, while not impossible, seems to me eccentric at best.

Indeed, I hesitate to call Québec's cinema "postcolonial," a name that could more easily apply to Irish cinema. I think that referring to Québec cinema as "postcolonial cinema" implies that it is congruent with a well-established group of semi-militant cinema (such as Third Cinema, which I will discuss shortly), which it really is not. I would agree that we can see various problems in Québec cinema common to post-colonial literature and film. The tendency to express frustration at the difficulties of national struggle in terms of violence done to women's bodies, for example, is a concern of much post-colonial discourse and a recurring theme throughout Québec cinema. Sometimes we see this in an explicitly feminist context: Anne-Claire Poirier's *Mourir à tue-tête* (1979) is an example of a film that seems to argue that rape is a metaphor for political oppression, a position most clearly visible in the concluding sequence, where there are shots of women from all over the world, including women from Cuba and Vietnam, expressing solidarity with one another against sexual violence (and Melanie Nash has argued that this is a very problematic comparison indeed [cited in Loiselle 1999a]). On the other end of the spectrum, Denys Arcand's *Le Déclin de l'empire americain* is an example of a film that (somewhat sadistically, one could argue) posits the various humiliations that women suffer or inflict on themselves as typical of the condition of Québec's political discourse. So I would concede that it might be possible to think of Québec cinema as post-colonial in the same way that some critics consider Canadian or Australian literature to be post-colonial. But like Gibbons, I chafe at the way in which this kind of nomenclature tends to iron out distinctions between Algeria/India and Australia/Canada's experience with colonialism, differences that are not finally so far apart from the differences between Ireland and Québec's experience with colonialism. Calling Québec's cinema "postcolonial" and following it with numerous qualifications and clarifications is not out of the question. It does seem to me, however, that use of this term in this context is inexact and open to confusion (the use of the term "national cinema," I will shortly discuss, is plagued with similar problems).

So, while none of the historical and political strands that I have detailed here line up perfectly, I do think that we can still see some important similarities in the evolution of Irish and Québec society. Arguments around colonialism, religion, sovereignty and modernity are important to almost all of the films that I discuss in this work, and they have been central to the history of Ireland and Québec. This kind of convergence also occurs, I believe, in the cinematic specificities of Irish and Québec cinema.

II. Institutions, Policy, Comparison

There are some crucial similarities between the early histories of Irish and Québec cinema, although it is equally possible to argue that the places in which they diverge are more important to understanding their subsequent evolution. In this section, I would like to explain how both Irish and Québec cinema have been dependent for their origins on non-theatrical, often state-sponsored films, and if some of this work had a similar romantic nationalism, there are some very important differences in terms of form. Furthermore, both Ireland and Québec have important cycles of early feature narratives, in addition to a very strict regime of Church-supervised censorship, which I will not get into here. The infrastructure which has supported contemporary Irish and Québec cinema are, however, remarkably similar, and I will show that, despite whatever differences may mark the emergence of these two cinemas, we can now see (at least on a macro-historical level) a certain convergence on an in-between model, the persistence of which will be a topic of discussion throughout this work.

Québec's and Ireland's early cycles of indigenous feature film making are not well known, although they helped to set the stage for these national cinemas as they exist today. The silent period in Ireland saw the production of a number of films directed by Canadian-born Sydney Olcott of the American-owned Kalem Productions, the establishment of the Film Company of Ireland in 1916 ("only a month before the Easter Rising" Kevin Rockett reports [1987:16]), and the production of such epic films as *Irish Destiny* (1925), a narrative of the Irish War of Independence. As Kevin Rockett has written, "the silent period represented an initial important phase in indigenous film making that in its volume, quality and relevance to historical events in Ireland, was not to be emulated until the 1970s" (1987:46), although there were some interesting features independently produced in the 1930s (such as *The Islandman* [Patrick Keenan Heale, 1938] or *The Dawn* [Tom Cooper, 1936]). I get a similar sense of early possibility in the narrative of early feature film production in Québec. Pierre Véronneau writes that "[n]ineteen commercial feature films were produced in Québec between 1944 and 1953. This was an unprecedented development: only two commercial features had been produced in the previous thirty years.... And at least ten more years were to pass before the revival of Québec fiction production in the 1960s" (1981:54). These included such works as the adaptation of Gratien Gélinas *Tit-Coq* (Gélinas/René Delacroix, 1953), rural dramas such as *Le Curé du village* (Paul Gury, 1949) or *Le Gros Bill* (Jean-Yves Bigras, 1949), or the Québec-City-set *La Fortresse* (Fedor Ozip, 1947). There is some real disjuncture in the historical specifics here: Québec was not a meaningful participant in feature-narrative production in the silent or early sound eras, and the 1940s-60s are a very dry period indeed for Irish feature narrative. But I would cling to this comparison, because we can see in both Ireland and Québec early attempts to create an indigenously produced cinema whose local orientation was clear either from its linguistic identity (there was not much market in the US of the 1940s and 50s for films in French) or its subject matter (there was not much market in Britain for films about the Irish War of Independence). This kind of work, not always of the highest technical or aesthetic qualities and not always very ambitious thematically, enunciated the simple idea of a national cinema in a period that preceded the government-supported initiatives designed to create the necessary institutions. Christine Tremblay-Daviault, in her history of this early cycle of Québec feature films, sums up the critical reception of this period as follows:

> La plupart des critiques n'ont tenu compte que de leur facture « régionaliste », pittoresque ou présumément nationaliste. D'autres les ont relégués dans le mépris ou le refus le plus implacable, en les comparant à d'autres produits culturels étrangers techniquement plus perfectionnés. Pourtant, images d'un « réalisme » incertain ou d'un idéal rêvé dans leur apparente glorification du terroir et du passé, ces œuvres comptent parmi les premières images cohérentes que la population québécoise ait reçues d'elle-même.
> (33)
>
> [Most critics have only accounted for their status as "regionalist," picturesque or presumably nationalist. Others have relegated them in contempt or with the most implacable refusal, in comparing them to other foreign cultural products that are more technically polished. And yet, images of an uncertain "realism" or of a dreamt ideal in their apparent glorification of the land and the past, these works are among the first coherent images that the Québec population got from themselves.]

It would be easy to have a very similar reaction to Irish cinema's early feature films, many of which are of a romantic-nationalist cast (such as the FCOI's *Irish Destiny*) or a nostalgic-rural-philic one (such as the Kalem-produced *Willy Reilly and his Collen Bawn* [1919]). But while Tremblay-Daviault is critical of much of the ideology of 40s and 50s Québec feature film making (an ideology whose emphasis on Catholic communitarian idealism and economic asceticism is very close to the prevailing ideology of pre-WWII Ireland), she makes it equally plain that part of this ideology is a burgeoning sense of national self-awareness, one that managed to find a cinematic expression, even though economics and the lack of an infrastructure made this extremely complex. These early films, if not exactly influential on the generation of filmmakers I am discussing in this work, speak to a climate where an indigenous national cinema, if sometimes uneven in terms of ideology, production values and institutional stability, has always been at least possible.[9]

Irish and Québec cinema are also distinguished by an important non-theatrical, non-commercial cinematic practice; they both strike me as exceptionally Griersonian national cinemas. John Grierson was the first head of the National Film Board of Canada, having been dispatched there in 1937 after successful stints in England running the film units of the General Post Office and the Empire Marketing Board. His 1944 manifesto "A Film Policy For Canada" (published in 1944 in *Canadian Affairs*) lays out the belief that Canada should work to develop a cinema that exists to the side of, not in competition with, Hollywood. I sometimes joke with my students that Hollywood executives worry about their opening weekend box office on the coasts, whereas Grierson wondered if he could get his films into union halls in Moose Jaw. "A Film Policy for Canada" has a section called "The Non-Theatrical Revolution" where Grierson writes that "[t]he non-theatrical audience is today being organized on a vast scale in all progressive countries. It represents a revolution in the film industry. It is concerned with education of every kind, professional and civic, and its potential development is enormous" (63). Both Ireland and Québec saw and continue to see a great deal of important film making that speaks to this non-commercial, semi-pedagogical idea of cinema's place in society.

In Québec, the early strand of this tendency is most clearly represented by Frs. Maurice Proulx and Albert Tessier, two documentarians generally classified as "amateur" filmmakers, who made documentaries about rural areas in the 1930s and 40s. Tessier worked more or less on his own, and showed films using his own projector and delivering simultaneous commentary, mostly in rural communities; Proulx was sponsored by the Ministère de l'Agriculture and the Ministère de la Colonisation, and while his films were sometimes exhibited as big events (sometimes attended by Duplessis, with whom Proulx tends to be associated), his films also exist in an essentially non-commercial, non-theatrical context. Yves Lever writes of Tessier that "trente ans avant le cinéma direct, et les appareils en moins... il en vit l'esprit en faisant un « cinéma de cameraman » avant tout" (56) [thirty years before cinéma direct, and lacking the equipment... he saw its spirit in creating a "cameraman's cinema"]. Of Proulx he writes that:

> On sent souvent (parfois trop) le travail de composition ; contrairement à Tessier, Proulx semble connaître toujours d'avance ses « scénarios » et les choix qu'ils impliquent ; il n'y existe pas la même fraîcheur et la même spontanéité.
> (58)
>
> [One often senses (sometimes too much) the work that goes into composition; contrary to Tessier, Proulx seems to always know his "scenarios" in advance and the choices that they imply; there is not the same freshness and the same spontaneity.]

I think that Lever gives short shrift to the aesthetic qualities of Proulx's films; his most widely seen, *En pays neufs* (1937) is as highly composed as Lever asserts but clearly aspires to a kind of photographic aestheticism that is actually not so far from Tessier's still photographs. What I would suggest is that these two filmmakers speak to two ends of the Québec documentary movement. One end of this movement favours highly composed images and semi-essayistic format; Jacques Godbout's films, the subject of chapter three, are perhaps the seminal example there. The other end of this movement favours a spontaneity that is often created by the use of lightweight camera and sound gear; Michel Brault and Gilles Groulx's *Les raquetteurs* (1958) provides a good example of this end. But these two "branches" are not in fact so far apart. Pierre Perrault's films ride a fine line between candid-eye and essayistic impulses, and this "middle path" was, arguably, predicted by the realist-but-manipulated form of Proulx and Tessier. Furthermore, both Proulx and Tessier worked entirely outside of the system of fiction film making, sometimes in a semi-governmental context, just as the Québec filmmakers associated with the NFB/ONF do. But much like Québec's early cycle of feature narratives, they are clearly ideologically inconsistent with post-1960s Québec cinema at the same time that they serve as prophecies of the kind of work that was to come. Despite their realist aesthetic, both Proulx and Tessier are creating ultimately artificial, idealised constructions of rural life. These constructions in a way not entirely dissimilar to Perrault, have more to do with urban discourse than with the actual lived experience of rural life. Perrault's primary ideological influence, after all, was the Montréal-based discourse of the Quiet Revolution, much as Proulx's was guided by the back-to-the-land movement of the 1930s, a movement that was initiated and supported by government ministries in Québec City, particularly the Ministère de la Colonisation, which commissioned Proulx's films.

Much the same is true of the non-commercial films that were made in Ireland during roughly the same period. Although I would characterise Ireland's cinema as disproportionately Griersonian, I would also agree with Kevin Rockett's assessment of just how far Irish cinema was from the actual films that were made under Grierson (or within the institutions he helped form). Unconsciously echoing the situation in Québec during roughly the same period, he reports on the warm welcome accorded to Robert Flaherty's extremely romantic *Man of Aran* (1934), writing that in light of its acclaim by so many influential Irish nationalists,

> it is hardly surprising that Irish documentary production did not follow the British route in the 1930s. There, an active group of filmmakers presented an oppositional cinema through documentary production with their focus on the working class and social problems. Irish film-makers made little or no attempt to explore such a reality in the 1930s and chose to reproduce in the main both the ahistorical ethnicity represented in *Man of Aran* and its economic off-shoots, the tourist-landscape film.
> (71-2)

But while both Rockett and Proinsias Ó Conluain note that Norris Davidson worked under Grierson for the Empire Markting Board, only Ó Conluain recounts the films he worked on for the EMB in Northern Ireland, writing that "*Hen Woman* an tideal a bhí eair ; i gContae an Dúin a rinneadh é agus gnoithe uibheacha an t-ábhar a bhí ann. Bhí Contae an Dúin ina chúlra do roinnt radharcanna a scannán eile de chuid Davidson: *Meat for Millions*, a bhfuil an t-ábhar soiléir ón teideal" (98) [*Hen Woman* was its title; it was made in County Down and its subject matter was the business of eggs. County Down was also the setting for part of another film of Davidson's: *Meat for Millions*, the subject clear from its title.] This is in vivid contrast to the film that Davison is better known for, a short, Irish-language companion film to *Man of Aran* called *Oidhche Sheanchais* [Storyteller's Night, 1934], which Rockett does discuss, although Ó Conluain, oddly, does not (and a print of which Sunniva O'Flynn, curator of the Irish Film Archive, has told me does not survive). At any rate, films like *Hen Woman* and *Meat For Millions,* if not exactly the activist films that Rockett longs to see in Irish cinema, were likely more engaged with the economic nuts and bolts of (Northern) Irish society, as were many of EMB films of this period (such engagement, of course, was meant to produce economic activity across what was then the British Empire). The irony of them being made by the *Empire* Marketing Board is fairly enormous (although this irony is no less pronounced in the case of pro-working class films produced by the EMB, such as *Drifters* [1929]). The more folkloric *Oidhche Sheanchais* remains much better known, and that far lesser known still than the canonical *Man of Aran*. Tessier and Proulx have clear links to the aesthetic and ideology of the folkloric/tourist/landscape film (Proulx even made films under commission from Québec's tourism office), and their work is, like many of the Irish documentaries of this period, primarily about the construction of an idealised ethnicity based in rural areas.

One very close Irish link to Proulx and Tessier are the films shot by the Radharc film unit, a series of short documentaries that were shown on RTÉ from 1961 to 96 and were explicitly Catholic in outlook (the head of the unit was Fr. Joseph Dunn, and when he died in 1996 the unit was disbanded). These short films, like much of the Proulx/Tessier work, seemed to see the explanation of non-rural existence as central to a nationalist, and ethnic, cultural project. An important point of contrast, though, is that Radharc shot films all over the world (often explanations of missionary activity), whereas Proulx and Tessier were strictly regional filmmakers. Perhaps a closer analogy can be found in the short newsreels produced between 1956 and 64 by the language-revival organisation Gael-Linn as part of their *Amharc Éireann* series. While couched in secular terms and acknowledging the modernisation of the Gaeltacht (such as what we see in *Lectricas Chonamara* [Electricity in Connemara, 1960]), also tended to be heavy on the Flaherty-esque romanticism of the stoic, soggy islander hacking away a rough existence.

There are important exceptions to this tendency, such as Liam O'Leary's scathingly critical film *Our Country* (1947), made partially as a campaign film for Clann na Poblachta. The film was something of a response to the Fianna-Fáil-sponsored film *A Nation Once Again* (1946), commissioned to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the death of writer Thomas Davis and highly nationalist and nostalgic (O'Leary wrote that it was "ballyhoo propaganda, chauvinistic and false but geared to the machinery of the Party," Fianna Fáil [cited in Rockett 1987:74]). But it was also a general indictment of the state of the Irish State, decrying urban poverty, the decay of agriculture, and the necessity to emigrate in a way that would be very familiar to fans of the golden age of Griersonian reform-documentary. What would be less familiar is the presence of an impossibly awkward narrator, whom we see sitting at a desk in the opening shot (it is Noel Browne, who would go on to become Minister of Health during the coalition government that included Clann na Poblachta and ran the Free State/Republic from 1948-1951). Less familiar still would be his analysis that Godless Communism is partially to blame for all this trouble. At any rate, *Our Country* does more or less fit the Griersonian mould of a reformist, semi-didactic, and nation-building film.

Much the same is true of the most famous non-fiction films of this period, George Morrison's Gael-Linn-sponsored documentaries *Mise Éire* (1959) and *Saoirse?* (1960). Lance Pettitt has called *Mise Éire* "Griersonian in its educational thrust and audio track" (82), and much the same could be said of *Saoirse?*. These were compilations of archival footage with a voice over narration in Irish (Gael-Linn has refused to strike any subtitled prints), with *Mise Éire* being mostly comprised of images from 1893-1918, and *Saoirse?* running from 1918 to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1922 (a third film covering the civil war was planned but never produced). Rockett writes that "*Mise Éire* and *Saoirse?* are in effect official histories of the struggle for independence, produced at a particular time of transition in Irish society" (1987:87-88), and their mixture of romantic nationalism (the only non-archival images in these films are of the timeless Irish landscape) with a melancholic take on the state of Irish unity does indeed seem uniquely organic to the Republic of the late 50s and early 60s.

The most explicit dissent from this model during this period was *The Rocky Road to Dublin* (1968), directed by Peter Lennon and photographed by Raoul Coutard, who was cinematographer on many of Jean-Luc Godard's films. This was a highly critical examination of a changing Irish identity, featuring interviews with prominent Irish intellectuals such as Conor Cruise O'Brien (who was at that time active in international struggles around de-colonisation). The film was widely seen, and shown at the Cannes Film Festival as an example of radical student film making. So while *The Rocky Road to Dublin* is a break from a Griersonian aesthetic and ideology, it shares with those documentaries a certain seriousness of purpose and an engagement with the realities of a liberal, modernising state. But despite its international acclaim and the discussion that it generated in Ireland, *The Rocky Road to Dublin* did not really serve as much of an example for Irish filmmakers, and no documentaries were produced in the coming years that could compare in terms of a critical attitude towards Irish identity and international aspirations or success. Because of its critical spirit and innovative, subjective style, though, it could be argued that it is a kind of preview of the kind of film making that I am describing here, a tradition that would emerge in earnest (in both documentary and fictional forms) in the late 1970s.

What I think is shown by these films by figures as diverse as Tessier, Proulx, Morrison, O'Leary, Radharc, Gael-Linn and Lennon, is that the Griersonian model is a complicated one, and one that it is easy to both idealise and damn. Ian Aitken tries to do the former in his book *Film and Reform*, whereas Canadian critics, such as Peter Morris and Joyce Nelson, have tried to do the latter by showing what a control-obsessed technocrat Grierson was (Morris links him with right-wing political thought of the 1930s and 40s). It is my sense that the former analysis is based in an understandable nostalgia for a non-commercial cinema interested (however patronisingly) in the lives of working people, whereas the latter is based on a certain irritation with the way that Canadian cinema, which still exists in the shadow of Grierson, has evolved along sometimes rather unadventurous lines. I think that Québec and Ireland, perhaps more Ireland, are living examples of the conflicted nature of this project. For while the films produced in Ireland of this period are generally (and, I think, rightly) acknowledged as cinematically backward, there are a fair number of them, and they are produced in an explicitly non-theatrical framework. Ó Conluain writes of this period that

> Tá gearrscannáin déanta cheana féin ag Cumann Cuardaíochta na hÉireann, Bord na Móna, Cumman na Croise Deirge, Muintír na Tíre, Glún na Buaidhe, Irish Shipping, ECA, fá ghnéithe éagsúla de shaol na tíre seo, agus is léir go dtuigeann na heagraíochtaí seo uilig go bhféadfadh an scannán a bheith ina chuidiú mhór acu chun na nithe a bhfuil suim acu iontu a chur chun cinn.
> (100-1)
>
> [The short films made in turn by the Courts of Ireland, the Irish Peat Board, the Red Cross, Muintír na Tíre, Glún na Buaidhe, Irish Shipping, and the ECA, were an odd thing in the life of this country, and it is clear that each one of these organisations understood that film would be able to help them greatly in generating interest in what they were doing.]

A sense of social and political utility didn't take quite as strong a hold in Québec, but it is certainly contained within the idea of the NFB/ONF, for which there is no Irish equivalent. So while this 1930s and 40s manifestation of Ireland and Québec's national cinema tends to avoid the kind of reformist spirit contained in the best films of the Grierson era (*Drifters*, *Housing Problems*, even *Industrial Britain*), its status as non-commercial is secure, its role as pedagogy clear; Irish and Québec filmmakers of this era, whatever their ideological predispositions, were children of the Non-Theatrical Revolution.

This belief in the role of government in the production of film shows up in a different form as a more developed feature-narrative sector emerges in Ireland and Québec. The early stages of this development were very different. Québec saw, during the 1960s and 70s, a wave of locally-produced feature films (many of which are discussed in this work, especially in chapter one on Jean-Pierre Lefebvre and chapter five on Denys Arcand), which were made possible in part by the development of a local infrastructure, whereas Ireland saw the development of a cinematic infrastructure basically intended for (and sometimes run by) foreign production companies.

Describing the shift in film policy marked by the Sean Lemass government (1958-66), Kevin Rockett writes that "Lemass abandoned the pretense of a self-sufficient indigenous film industry in favour of a film-studios complex to service international productions, and, in line with many Fianna Fáil policies, economic and political expediency overwhelmed any commitment to a goal of a national or even indigenous film culture" (2001:164). The establishment in 1958 of Ardmore Studios is often seen as a kind of embodiment of everything that went wrong in early Irish film policy. Although its initial planning included an association with the Abbey Theatre, it became clear very quickly that it was primarily meant to service foreign producers wanting to film in Ireland, not Irish filmmakers wanting to build a sustainable national cinema. The prohibitive cost of its facilities made this clear, and the almost all-English staff only re-enforced this point. Ardmore's establishment was shortly followed by the creation of the Irish Film Finance Corporation in 1960, which Brian McIlroy describes as

> ...similar in concept to the British National Film Finance Corporation (BNFC, established in 1950). However, whereas the BNFC actively supported home-grown production, the IFFC was empowered to grant monies *only if* a distribution guarantee was already set up. Naturally, this put the budding Irish film-maker at a distinct disadvantage.
> (1989:43, emphasis his)

This is not the place for a detailed history of Ardmore; such work can be found in Rockett (1987) and McIlroy (1988). Suffice it to say that the studio engendered the resentment of many in the Irish film community, as it did indeed focus on foreign productions shooting in Ireland. It was re-purchased by the State in 1975, re-named the National Film Studios of Ireland (NFSI), and slowly lost enormous amounts of money. It was re-sold and placed in receivership several times. The NFSI did produce two innovative, low-budget works by Tommy McArdle – *The Kinkisha* (1978) and *It's Handy When People Don't Die* (1982) – but it never served as the locus of indigenous production that independent filmmakers needed to get a national cinema off the ground.

At roughly the same time, the institutions that would help Québec cinema to emerge were consolidating, and that early process was much smoother than what came to pass in Ireland. In 1956, the NFB/ONF re-located its headquarters from Ottawa to Montréal, and this could certainly be seen as the beginning of Québec's national cinema as we now know it. The presence of an institution as large and stable as the NFB/ONF provided the opportunity for a pool of local technicians to emerge, and the relatively de-centred nature of production work allowed for a lot of experimentation. The Équipe française of the 1950s and early 1960s is an especially good example of the fertile environment that the NFB/ONF could foster; as I mentioned before, Gilles Groulx's and Michael Brault's short documentary portrait of a snowshoe race in Sherbrooke, *Les raquetteurs* (1958), is the signature film of this moment. Gilles Marsolais writes that this film, which was with cutting-edge lightweight camera gear, "acquiert une valeur de symbole; il devient manifeste de l'équipe française, du renouveau qu'elle entend provoquer au niveau des structures et de la pratique du cinéma à l'ONF" (1999:78) [acquires a symbolic value; it becomes a manifesto of the French Unit, of the revival that they are trying to provoke at the level of the structures and the practice of film making at the NFB]. Literally every Québec filmmaker I discuss in this work was, at one point or another, engaged by the NFB/ONF, either on staff (Pierre Perrault, Michel Brault, Jacques Godbout) or as a freelancer (Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, Denys Arcand). No institution in Ireland can make a similar claim; the NFSI was notoriously exclusionary, RTÉ gave some filmmakers early opportunities but was never as open as the NFB/ONF, and while Bob Quinn acted as a mentor to and employed filmmakers such as Cathal Black, Thaddeus O'Sullivan and Joe Comerford in a way that is similar to the work that Jacques Godbout or Jean-Pierre Lefebvre did when they acted as producers at the NFB/ONF, Quinn's work was a reaction to the cinematic infrastructure of Ireland, whereas Lefebvre and Godbout were enabled by that infrastructure.

This period also saw the emergence of a semi-independent, governmentally-supported sector of film making in Québec. In 1961, Québec's Service de ciné-photographie, which had commissioned films from both Proulx and Tessier, became the Office du film du Québec, and tried to shift its efforts from state-funded didacticism to a more professional approach to film making, becoming something of a modest competitor of the NFB/ONF. This is also when fairly large production companies such as Niagara Films, Omega Productions, and Crawley Films were formed, often making work for the then-emergent medium of television (Crawley produced *Au pays de Neufve-France*, a series about l'Île-aux-Coudres for which Pierre Perrault wrote the text; I discuss Perrault's films about this island in chapter two). Lever writes that "au même moment, Denis Héroux, Jean-Claude Labrecque, Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, Jean-Paul Ladouceur et d'autres fondent aussi des compagnies qui portent leur nom" (177) [at the same moment, Denis Héroux, Jean-Claude Labrecque, Jean-Pierre Lefebvre and others also found companies which bear their name]. La Loi du cinéma de 1975 was another crucial turning point for Québec's emerging national cinema. This law created the Institut québécois du cinéma (IQC), which sought to be a rough equivalent of the Canadian Film Development Corporation (CFDC), established in 1967; both sought to support semi-independent film making, and both sought to ride a very fine line between establishing an industry and contributing to a cultural project (this kind of quandary is also an ongoing subtext in the development of Irish film policy). This was a very fertile period in Québec fiction film making, notable for Denys Arcand's *Gina* (1975) and Jean-Pierre Lefebvre's *Le vieux pays où Rimbaud est mort* (1977), which were widely seen internationally and recipients of this kind of subsidy. The years 1983-1994 saw a great deal of ciné-legislative activity in Québec (which is detailed in Michel Coulombe's entry for "Société de développment des enterprises culturelles" in *Le Dictionnaire du cinéma* *québécois*), including the scrapped Loi sur le ciéma de 1983, which would have mandated that Québec distributors be at least 80% Canadian-owned (it was a late initiative of the Parti Québécois government that in 1984 the newly-elected Liberals dropped under pressure from the Motion Picture Association of America) and a series of laws that established a series of organisations meant to subsidise and offer a long-term vision for film production in Québec. This was also the case in Canada as a whole; 1983, for instance, saw the establishment of Telefilm Canada, which replaced the CFDC and had a mandate to develop both film and television. Currently, the Société de développement des entreprises culturelles (SODEC) is the primary funding source for film making in Québec, and almost every feature-length film made in the province is subsidised both by it and by Telefilm Canada.

While there have certainly been arguments about the funding and mandate of these Québécois organisations, the sense of deep malaise and discontent that defined Irish film policy of the 60s and 70s is missing. While the Arts Councils in both the Republic and NI began to take an interest in film production in the 1970s (Bob Quinn's *Poitín*, which I discuss in chapter two, was the recipient of the first script grant given by the Arts Council of Ireland in 1977), they had a relatively small amount of money to give. The government of the Republic established, in 1981, the Bord Scannán na hÉireann / Irish Film Board (BSÉ), whose mandate was to "assist and encourage by any means it considers appropriate the making of films in the state and the development of an industry in the state for the making of films" (qtd. in McIlroy 1988:61). The Bord was almost immediately drowned in controversy, as its first grant was to be given to Neil Jordan's debut feature *Angel*. The film's executive producer was John Boorman, who was also a member of BSÉ's executive, and, as Kevin Rockett notes, "additional resentment was felt by independent film-makers when it became clear that *Angel* was the only project to be allocated funds in 1981. (Money was actually returned to the Exchequer at the end of the year)" (1987:119). It was not a good start, and while BSÉ did contribute to some important independent films (such as Bob Quinn's *Budawanny* [1983], Cathal Black's *Pigs*, [1984], and Joe Comerford's *Reefer and the Model* [1988]), its first mandate was not viewed as particularly successful. It was disbanded in 1987 by a Fianna Fáil government annoyed with its failure to produce profitable films. It was re-activated in 1993 under a Fine Gael government, largely due to the efforts of Michael D. Higgins, the far-sighted Minister of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht (and actually a member of the Irish Labour Party; it was a coalition government). Although he was not unaware of commercial considerations, there was a sense throughout the Higgins regime that the Bord was seen more as a cultural body than as one devoted strictly to economic development. They began to seem closer to Údaras na Gaeltachta (The Gaeltacht Authority), whose brief is basically development-oriented (create a sustainable economy in the Gaeltacht) but which exists in a basically non-profit space (the Gaeltacht will, probably, always need some subsidy; a tiny Irish-speaking town like An Ceathrú Rua will never be as prosperous as Dublin or Galway, and it would be insane to think it could be). The 1980s and 90s also saw a notable increase in EU participation in Irish film funding, particularly from the MEDIA program, which was based in Dublin. This is when Ireland saw a dramatic increase in its cinema's visibility on domestic and international screens; films such as *The Crying Game* (Neil Jordan, 1993), *In the Name of the Father* (Jim Sheridan, 1993), *Some Mother's Son* (Terry George, 1996), *The Boxer* (Sheridan, 1998) and *Michael Collins* (Jordan, 1996) came to symbolise the incredibly vital re-birth of Irish cinema.

Although of these films only *Some Mother's Son* and *The Boxer* were actually subsidised by BSÉ, (the others were financed through international co-production agreements, which became very common during this period), they all benefited from the Republic's attempts to create a tax regime friendly to film production; this is also a feature of Canadian and Québec film policy of this period, and I believe that this policy model has proved in both countries to be highly problematic. The 1980s in Canada, and to a certain extent Québec, is known as the era of the Capital Cost Allowance program, a regime of "tax shelters" wherein producers were given highly lucrative tax breaks for filming in Canada and using a certain amount of Canadian personnel. What this often ended up meaning was that American producers came to Canada to make films set in the United States, starring and directed by Americans but with enough Canadians in bit parts and minor technical roles to qualify for the tax break. These were not, then, "Canadian" or "Québec" films in any meaningful way; *Porky's* (Bob Clark, 1981) and *Meatballs* (Ivan Reitman, 1979) are thought of as seminal examples of the "Tax Shelter film," a *genre maudit* if ever there was one. Something very similar went on in Ireland in the mid- and late-1990s, although the disasters in question generally lost money as well, unlike *Porky's* or *Meatballs*. Section 35 of the Republic's 1987 Finance Act allowed film producers to claim tax breaks if they made their films in Ireland with Irish crews. This did indeed lead to increased investment in Irish film (*Michael Collins* was a beneficiary of the policy), but it also led to increased use of Ireland as a cheaper Hollywood location (such as with Mel Gibson's *Braveheart* [1995], where Ireland became Scotland, and Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* [1998], where Ireland became France). And it led to a number of scams: *Feeny's Rainbow*, *The Sign of the Fish*, and *Divine Rapture* are all films that benefited from Section 35 but collapsed before they were finished. The infamous *Space Truckers* (Stuart Gordon, 1997) seemed headed for that fate as well, after having cost Irish taxpayers millions in lost revenue and numerous investors large amounts of money, all without a finished film ever appearing. That film was actually released in 1997 to a disastrous critical reception and box-office performance, and has become a cautionary tale (see Hugh Linehan's coverage of the problems in the *Irish Times*). Overall, I think that Ron Burnett's assessment of Québec's relationship with its own and Canada's feature film policy is a good summary of the problems faced *both* by Québec and Ireland in this realm:

> Policy becomes a vehicle for national claims on identity while in actual fact serving the needs of a naturalized notion of market economies and a very specific notion of cultural production and also reinforcing the political power of the agents involved. Québec's desire to control the flow of cultural production within its own borders looks more and more like an attempt to maintain the discourse of an elite, now identified as a nation. (260)

What Irish and Québec cinema also share is a close relationship with television. Radio-Canada, the French-language arm of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, has long played a significant role in the financing of feature film production; this was especially important in the 1970s and 80s. Writing about the "maturité" phase of Québec cinema, Lever assesses that:

> Radio-Canada, Radio-Québec, et les chaînes de télévision privées contribuent toujours de façon importante à la vitalité des compagnies de production... Plusieurs, parmi les meilleurs créateurs (Carle, Arcand, Mankiewicz, Spry, Yves Simoneau, Lauzon, etc.), y trouvent aussi de quoi assurer leur gagner-pain entre deux réalisations.
> (301)
>
> [Radio-Canada, Radio-Québec, and the privately owned networks always make important contributions to the vitality of the independent production companies... Also, they provide some of the best filmmakers (Carle, Arcand, Mankiewicz, Spry, Yves Simoneau, Lauzon, etc.) with their bread and butter between jobs.]

Radio Telefis Éireann has been the subject of considerable criticism for failing to play a similar role in Irish cinema. Bob Quinn resigned from the station in the 1970s out of frustration with this situation (he left for Connemara, where he set up his own independent company, Cinegael). Kevin Rockett has castigated the role that the station has played in Irish cinema, writing that "[a] cumbersome, conservative, and centralized national broadcasting service with a public service remit, RTÉ reluctantly set up an Independent Production Unit in the mid-1990s after being forced by legislation to invest up to twenty percent of its production budget in independent productions" (1998:25). Ed Guiney, producer of Gerard Stembridge's first film *Guilttrip* (1995) has offered a similar critique, writing that "until very recently, home-produced television drama has been made almost entirely in-house by RTÉ. As a result, it has failed to provide the opportunities for new directors and producers to cut their teeth on, especially after they have made a short film and before moving on to make a feature" (21). An "in-house" production like *The Riordans* (1965-79), however, seems to me crucial to the development of Irish cinema, and could be argued to account somewhat for Irish cinema's tendency towards realism (Gibbons also argues for its importance in relation to Ireland's slow emergence into modernity [1996:57-67]). Pettitt writes that the series "was innovative in that it used outside broadcast television cameras normally used for sports or special events coverage to shoot on location in Dunboyne, County Meath" (171), and does indeed illustrate a mixture of fictional and documentary techniques that would be quite at home in the Québec cinema of the 1960s and 70s. Furthermore, while Guiney has a valid critique, his complaint leaves out the fact that the creation "in house" of TV productions was still a major improvement over the situation of showing only programs from the UK or the USA.

This is also true of the Irish-language broadcaster TG4 (previously Teilifís na Gaeilge [TnaG]), although it has been much nicer to independent producers than RTÉ. TnaG has no real Québec equivalent, although Pádraig Ó Siadhail has argued for a parallel between TG4 and Canada's Aboriginal People's Television Network (APTN), asking:

> Cad chuige TG4? Cad chuige APTN? Is iad na bunaidhmeanna atá aige rólmhúnlaí deimhneacha a chur ar fáil do phobail bhundúchasacha is a cheadú do Cheanadaigh i gcoitinne dul thart leis na steireátíopa seanbhunaithe is a thuilleadh a fhoghlaim faoi stair, faoi chultúr is faoi shaol bhundúchasaigh na linn seo.

> [Why TG4? Why APTN? They are establishments that have clearly gotten their shape from Aboriginal people, 1% of Canadians in general, and they go around the well-established stereotypes, in addition to studying history, culture, and contemporary Aboriginal life.]

Ó Siadhail clearly sees these operations as non-commercial and educational, being as much about advocacy and language preservation as anything else. One could argue that the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, based in Nunavut but available in northern Québec, occupies a similar cultural space. APTN, the IBC and TG4 all broadcast in endangered, minority languages, and each exist somewhere between a community broadcast and a commercial model and so end up relying heavily on independent producers. But the IBC and APTN play a very small part, if any part at all, in Québec cinema. I think this is closely related to Bill Marshall's contention that "Québec cinema arguably lagged behind developments in Québec literature in which the presence of the Amerindian became relatively common" (244-45). Aboriginal people are not entirely absent from Québec cinema, but their cultural struggles do not occupy a place comparable to that of Irish-speakers in Irish culture, or Irish cinema; it seems safe to say that a distinct national consciousness exists among Aboriginal people, whereas the Irish language is a crucial, if oft-forgotten, part of Irish national identity.

That does not, mean, though, that TnaG began to universal acclaim. Indeed, describing the controversy that greeted the establishment of the station, Dairena Ní Chinnéide, director of the Galway "antenna office" of the EU's MEDIA program (based in Dublin) has written that:

> Ce fut après l'annonce faite en novembre [1994] qu'un débat animé embrassa les pages des différents journaux nationaux et régionaux. Des

> titres tels que “Teilifís na Gaeilge, c’est [de] la folie pure”... éclaboussèrent les journaux... Je trouve le caractère passionné des attaques très étonnant. Cela faisait longtemps que personne ne s’était emporté à propos de la question linguistique si on excepte les milieux irlandophones. Pour une fois le citoyen eut à se demander quelle valeur avait pour lui la langue irlandaise.... Mais, comment peut-on parler d’une langue et d’un héritage moteur de l’identité culturelle en terms de finance?
> (34)
>
> [After the announcement was made in November {1994} an animated debate broke out in the pages of various national and regional newspapers. Titles like “Teilifís na Gaeilge, it’s pure foolishness” ... splashed across those newspapers.... I find the passionate nature of the attacks very surprising. It had been a long time since anyone took any notice at all of the language question, except in Irish-speaking areas. For once the citizen was asking what value the Irish language had for him.... But how can one speak of a language and of a heritage, powered by cultural identity, in terms of finance?]

Irish is obviously not going to make anyone any money, but it is still important; linking that attitude to media-making seemed to be the final achievement of the Michael D. Higgins approach to the Heritage, Arts and the Gaeltacht portfolio. TnaG seemed to herald the decision that media subsidy and was to be about culture, not finance. Theoretically, this could bode well for innovative Irish cinema, setting a precedent for the removal of the financial imperative in favour of cultural re-vitalisation. And at first, TnaG seemed to be keeping some part of its roots as a community-based affair; it began as a pirate broadcast from Connemara, which Ní Chinnéide reports was based on the example of such broadcasts in the Faroe Islands. Indeed, following TnaG’s establishment, Bob Quinn and Donncha O hEallaithe were regularly involved in controversy about whether the station should be a national broadcaster or retain its community-TV roots. These kinds of arguments turned out to be the least of their problems. In

1999, struggling to boost dismal ratings, the station changed its name to TG4, and as Jackie Boruke reported in the *Irish Times*, "TG4 will broadcast 12 hours a day, with four-and-a-half or five hours of programming in Irish" (10). This is a significant transformation of a station that had been almost entirely in Irish (including the commercials). And it seems more than a coincidence that the switch happened after Fine Gael had lost power to Fianna Fáil, the party who, when last in government, had shut down BSÉ for essentially financial reasons.

This kind of mixture between film and television has been discussed by Martin Allor in a way that seems to me particularly relevant to the problems of Québec and Irish cinema. Commenting on the overlap between actors, directors, and other artists in Québec's film and television productions, he writes that:

> This organizational and occupational hybridity is, I assume, relatively common in small countries. But, in other ways, the sector of audiovisual production is integrated into the peculiar political economic system in Québec (and Canada) – what one Canadian critic has called a permeable Fordism. In one form or another, the entire sector of cultural production is characterized by structures of coproduction. More importantly, this system of production almost always involves provincial and federal investment or subvention.
> (72)

I think Allor has got this half right. Such hybridity is indeed common to smaller countries (like Québec or Ireland, but also like Greece or Portugal), but just as common to such countries is the reliance on state funding; I do not think this at all peculiar to Canada. And I think this statement of Allor's is likely related to a comparative error that is just as often made with Ireland as with Québec or Canada. It is typical to compare these national cinemas with other larger national cinemas that share a linguistic identity: Québec cinema with French cinema, Irish cinema with British cinema. These comparisons are inorganic because British cinema has a commercial sector that is basically absent in Irish cinema, while France's popular cinema serves a very different role than Québec's. Indeed, Bill Marshall has written that:

> Québec popular cinema constructs a "people," represented in the diegesis and/or assembled in its audience(s): that "people" is both origin and always, as we shall see, in a process of historical change which, more visibly than for many other national "peoples," affects its very being and self-definition.
> (173)

Québec pop cinema, then, like its locally produced television programs (which, also like Québec's popular cinema, will not be dealt with in this work), have quite a bit more to accomplish than most commercial media sectors, such as, for example, France's, which does not have as pronounced of a burden of minority cultural representation.

I would like to avoid such comparative errors, and believe that Irish and Québec cinema are much better placed alongside other marginalised national cinemas, such as Portugal's, Norway's, or Switzerland's. Indeed, writing about the history of Spanish cinema, Román Gubren has complained that "[l]os prejuicios intelectuales, que son antiguos, difundieron con eficacia el tópico de que el cine español era prácticamente inexistente, o irrelevante..." (9) [the intellectual prejudices, which are very old, effectively disseminated the cliché that Spanish cinema was practically non-existent, or irrelevant...]. This sounds very much like Stanley Kauffmann's declaration in a 1963 issue of *The New Republic*, that "there is, in effect, no Irish film.... Why are there not more and better Irish films – a body of work comparable to what other European countries have produced?" (218). This utterly bleak assessment wasn't quite right, as I have sought to show, but the fact that such a statement could be made by one of the United States' very best film critics is a powerful illustration of how marginalised Irish cinema has been; I think that Québec cinema of the 1940s and 50s, which I have argued is comparable in terms of production, could easily have elicited similar statements. Québec and Irish cinema are "small cinemas," heavily dependent on television, independent production companies, and government sources for their funding and often centrally concerned with politics; this is not true in the same way of "major" cinemas like British or French cinema. I am struck by the way that Chon Noriega looks at Chicano cinema; in his book *Shot in America*, he organises his history along four lines:

> (1) the activism that opened the door to film schools, local television stations, and noncommercial funding sources, (2) the development of independent production companies, media advocacy groups, and international affiliations, (3) continued professional and legal efforts to integrate public and network television and (4) the aesthetic strategies that related documentary production to the Chicano movement, national audiences, and Third World politics.
> (xxxiii)

These four strands – increased access to modes of production, development of local companies, dependence on television and a combination of nationalist and internationalist politics, are also at the heart of Irish and Québec cinema. Linking them with Chicano cinema, and other small, embattled cinemas like it, seems to me a more accurate representation of the institutional and political situation of these two embattled national cinemas than basing a comparison on language alone.

III. Theory

Irish Studies has, over the past few years, seen a voluminous debate on the role of critical theory and a comparative approach in a discipline that had until quite recently been overwhelmingly focussed on traditional models of literary and historical scholarship and which had pronounced tendencies towards the parochial. While its intellectual climate is always lively, I do not find the same sense of upheaval in Québec Studies of the same period. It would be too facile to ascribe this entirely to the lack of a Quiet Revolution in Ireland, but I am nevertheless struck by the fact that if there is a re-evaluation in Québec's intellectual life that is comparable to what has gone on in Irish cultural criticism, it happened in the 1960s and 70s. Derry's Field Day group, in addition to producing plays by Brian Friel, Stewart Parker and others, published a pamphlet series in the 1980s (including work by Edward Said and Fredric Jameson) and a highly controversial, three-volume anthology of Irish writing, that ushered in a robust re-evaluation of the means to discuss Irish culture. Although I will not make it here, I think there is a link to be made there with the work of the Montréal magazine *Cité Libre*, which gave an early intellectual platform for the first generation of post-Quiet Revolution Québec intellectuals, including the opposing embodiments of that Revolution's progressive rhetoric, Pierre Trudeau and René Lévesque. One of the major shifts that we see in post-1960 Québec intellectual life is the emergence of a national consciousness that is based in secular liberalism, not an ultra-Catholic sense of racial destiny; one of the shifts that we see in Irish cultural criticism of the last two decades is the consolidation of a post-colonialist model that seeks to make links with other colonised cultures (such as India, or, in the occasional use of Frantz Fanon, Algeria) but which is also sceptical of the essentialism of previous nationalist models. And while, as I have just pointed out, there is considerable distance between Québec and Ireland in terms of their colonial status and their security as national formations, what they share is a tendency to confound theoretical work. I want to make a quick sketch of some of this writing, focussing on theoretical work around nationhood generally, on post-colonial theory, and on work done around the concept of the "national cinema," all of which, I will show, has a lot to offer my project at hand, but much of which also seems not quite right for these specific instances, and by extension, not quite right for the kinds of "in-between" cultural entities that I believe Irish and Québec cinema to be.

The framework for nationhood that is the most useful in the case of both Ireland and Québec is no doubt Benedict Anderson's notion of the "imagined community;" this imaginative aspect is of central importance to national identity in both Québec and Ireland. Anderson famously wrote in his study *Imagined Communities* that "I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (5-6). In Ireland and Québec, imagination takes a prominent role because the relevant state formations are not perfectly consistent with national understanding. An essentially national consciousness is, after all, a pronounced part of the political life of Québec, a consciousness that widely exists among *both* federalist and separatist Francophones. And while that consciousness occasionally crops up in aspects of state formations (such as the fact that the Québec's legislative assembly is called the Assemblé Nationale, its archives called the Archives Nationales, etc.), it is essentially inconsistent with the organisation of the Canadian state of which Québec is a part. Much the same is true of Northern Ireland's role in the United Kingdom; while the peace process has led to a devolution of power (manifested in the re-vitalised Stormont Assembly in Belfast, which, as part of the Good Friday agreement, replaced direct rule from London) and the creation of various North-South co-operative and advisory bodies, the very essence of the Act of Union is that Northern Ireland is as much a part of the UK as Stoke-on-Trent, or for that matter as much as Chicoutimi is part of Canada. Any variance on this position requires an act of *imagination*. Catholics in Northern Ireland who consider themselves part of Ireland and not the UK, while they can become a citizen of and carry a passport from the Republic, must essentially imagine themselves to be part of that Republic; they are for all material purposes within the UK state, and not everyone resident in that state is willing to make that same act of imagination. Much the same is true of Québec residents who consider themselves part of a Québec nation; their belonging comes not from the material aspects of a state apparatus (such as currency, postage, or a passport) but from an act of imagination, one that is not made by a significant number of residents of that territory (a minority in

Québec, although a majority in Northern Ireland[10]). Personal acts of imagination are not, of course, the only aspect of national belonging ("today, I think I shall be Lithuanian!" joked a friend of mine, reminding me of this). State apparatuses inevitably contribute to this kind of imaginary, and cinema, so often discussed in terms of "the imaginary," has the potential to be a crucial part of this process. Lenin seemed to realise this when he made his famed statement about cinema being "the most important art" for the new Soviet Union. But Québécois TV dramas like *Virginie* have just as much of a role to play in this process as a heroic/nationalist film like *Battleship Potemkin* (Sergei Eisenstein, 1926); a film need not be explicitly political or nationalist to visualise, and contribute to the collective imaginary, of a given nation. I will momentarily discuss how "nationalist or explicitly nationally-aware film making" and "a national cinema" are not necessarily the same thing; both, though, do contribute to the imaginative borders of national identity.

Recognition of this imaginative aspect of nationhood and a move away from strict state-dominated notions of national belonging have been a crucial part of Irish "post-nationalism," and much of this thought is relevant to Québec as well. While he is not often evoked in this kind of work, I hear echoes of Ernest Gellner's writings on nationalism contained within its arguments. Gellner has asserted that:

> What distinguishes the areas within which nationalism has become the crucial political principle is that some deep and permanent, profound change has taken place in the way in which society is organised – a change which makes anonymous, internally fluid and fairly undifferentiated, large-scale, and culturally homogenous communities appear as the only

> legitimate repositories of political authority. The powerful *and novel* principle of "one state, one culture" has profound roots.
> (1987:9, emphasis mine)

In quite a bit of his work, Gellner focusses on the fact that neither culturally homogenous nor fully autonomous nation-states are really in operation now and are in fact a relatively recent invention; both Ireland and Québec are testimony to this kind of ambiguity, and both seem to demand new approaches to both governance and national identity. This is also echoed by Etienne Balibar, who has described 'the illusion of national identity" as follows:

> L'illusion est double. Elle consiste à croire que les générations qui se succèdent pendant des siècles sur un territoire approximativement stable, sous une désignation approximativement univoque, se sont transmis une substance invariante. Et elle consiste à croire que l'évolution, dont nous sélectionnons rétrospectivement les aspects de façon à nous percevoir nous-mêmes comme son aboutissement, était la seule possible, qu'elle représentait un destin.
> (117-18)
>
> [The illusion is double. It consists of believing that successive generations, across several centuries in a basically stable territory, under a basically univocal designation, have transmitted a never-changing substance. And it consists of believing that evolution, in that we retrospectively select the aspects in a way that we see ourselves as its outcome, was the only one possible, that it represented a destiny.]

This sense, that a nation or a nation-state is something other than a provisional, historically constructed entity, is indeed a pervasive part of contemporary nationalist discourse, and it is one to which the pluralist, provisional nature of Québec and Ireland pose serious challenges. Richard Kearney writes that a resolution of the "national problem" in Ireland "requires our seeing the situation since 1921 as an interim one" (11), and much the same could be said of the "situation" in Québec since 1912, when it acquired its current borders, or even the "situation" since 1995, when the referendum on sovereignty failed by less than one half of one percent. As states with fixed boundaries, both Québec and Ireland are very young indeed, and indeed likely to change before long (Ireland, in the face of European unification and its challenges to sovereignty, perhaps more likely than Québec); this fluidity draws attention to some central strands in recent work around nation.

The dual strands of governance and national identity are the pre-occupation of Kearney's *Postnationalist Ireland*, a work that seeks both to recover the pluralist, enlightenment roots of republicanism and understand how European unification is impacting upon nationalism on both sides of the Irish Sea. "Is it possible to break the equation of national self-determination and state sovereignty?" he asks. "Is it possible to re-think the question of sovereignty *culturally* as well as *politically*? In terms of identity instead of territory?" (17). He thinks that it is, and sees the European Union and the special kind of sovereignty that it imposes as a key to this, and the emergence of a "new republic," one that is multi-national and not linked to territory as such, as its key. He sums up the project by writing that:

> A new republic would surely only be "representative" in a genuine sense if it acknowledged that the common name of Irishman includes diverse groups both within the frontiers of the island (sub-national communities) and in the wider world (international communities). If the idea of a republic is to have any positive meaning for Ireland in the year 2000 it will not, I am persuaded, be one reducible to the boundaries of an insular nation-state.
> (38)

This flies in the face of Anderson's emphasis on borders and territory, but it seems to me to also incorporate his emphasis on an abstract sense of connection, one that cannot be literally realised, not through communion with every member of the nation, and not through the flawless cohesion of nation, state and territory.

These kinds of problems are also important to Québec nationalism; how parallel, I wonder, are North American Francophones outside Québec to the "international communities" that Kearney speaks of? My response would be that these parallels do not quite work; the question of diaspora seems to me to be particularly different, and these differences have been traced in Marcel Martel's work on the complex relationship of Québec with Canada's Francophones outside Québec. He writes that:

> Jusqu'au début des années 1960, le concept des deux peuples fondateurs constitue la bouée de sauvetage à laquelle se cramponnent les élites canadiennes-françaises, qui espèrent ainsi briser la dynamique des rapports majorité/minorité dans laquelle les Canadiens français sont perdants.... Selon ce concept qui se rattache à la pensée nationaliste, le Québec doit aider les Canadiens français des autres provinces, car il a tout à perdre si les avant-postes nationaux constitués par les groupes canadiens-français répartis sur l'ensemble du territoire canadien viennent à disparaître.... George-Émile Lapalme élabore d'ambitieux projets pour son futur ministère des affaires culturelles [de l'Ordre Jacques Cartier]. Il considère que le rôle du Québec est d'être la mère patrie des Francophones en Amérique, à l'exemple de la France vis-à-vis ses départements d'outre-mer et ses anciennes colonies. En 1965, le Premier ministre Lesage affirme que son gouvernement défend les droits des groupes minoritaires partout au Canada.
> (171, 174)

> [Until the beginning of the 1960s, the concept of two founding peoples constituted the lifeline grabbed by the French-Canadian élite, who hoped to put an end to the minority/majority relational dynamic in which the French-Canadians were lost.... According to this concept that was linked to nationalist thought, Québec had to aid French-Canadians in other provinces, because it had everything to lose if the national front-lines,

> constituted by the French-Canadian groups spread throughout the fullness of the Canadian territory, were to disappear.... George-Émile Lapalme set out some ambitious projects for his future Ministry of Culture {of the Ordre Jacques Cartier}. He considered that the role of Québec was to be the mother country of Francophones in North America, and had as his example France's relationship with its Overseas Departments and former colonies. In 1965 Premier Lesage affirmed that his government would defend the rights of minority groups throughout Canada.]

This attitude changed dramatically after the Quiet Revolution, however, when the building of a nation-state in Québec became the primary project of Québec nationalism. Martel recalls that:

> Les chefs ontariens se montrent résolus à combattre le projet d'État-nation canadien-français d'abord à l'intérieur de l'Ordre Jacques Cartier, puis, après la dissolution de ce dernier, dans les séances des États généreux du Canada français. Pour ces gens, le projet néo-nationaliste québécois exclut tous les Canadiens français établis hors du territoire de l'État-nation en construction.
> (174)
>
> [The Ontario heads began to resolutely combat the project of building a French-Canadian nation-state, at first at the interior of the Ordre Jacques Cartier, and, after its dissolution, through the États genereaux du Canada français. For these people, the Québécois neo-nationalist project excluded all French-Canadians living outside of the nation-state in construction.]

While the pledge of the Lesage government to defend Francophones throughout Canada does have some echoes in the Anglo-Irish agreement of 1985 (wherein it was agreed that the Republic had an interest in and could act as an advocate for those in Northern Ireland who considered themselves Irish, and who were in many cases citizens of the Republic as well), the similarities end there. Irish people outside of Ireland, especially in the United States and Canada, were throughout the 19th and 20th century (and, in some neighbourhoods in Boston, on up into the 21st) highly supportive of Irish separatism and republicanism; Martel's argument is that the "international" communities of French-Canadians in fact take the opposition position. This vision of nationalism is closer to Anderson's emphasis on territory, borders, and finality.

François Paré has actually argued that Francophones outside of Québec can be fruitfully understood in comparison with Irish speakers (he focusses on the poetry of Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill and the films and poetry of Acadian Herménégilde Chiasson). He writes that:

> My contention is that cultural margins, as embodied by linguistic and cultural minorities such as the Corsicans, the Irish-speaking communities in Ireland, or the Franco-Ontarians and the Acadians in Canada, as cultures of disintegration, constitute nevertheless an integral term of reference against which majority cultures construct identity. These are in my view the many faces of 'otherness': not the radial otherness of perfect strangers... but the difference with oneself, the *margin of minimal otherness*; that which reveals a desire to exist and develop as a collective subject, and designates the ghost of our own cultural disintegration, of our silence as a culture of belonging.
> (87)

I think that this is a very interesting comparison, as both Acadia and the Gaeltacht share a sense of unresolved problems about language, culture, and the relationship to the linguistic or national centre. The argument I have with this position, though, is that the relationship of Acadia to Québec is very different from the relationship of the Gaeltacht to Dublin. It is very clear that while French may be in danger in Acadia, it is not in danger on the continent of North America, whereas Irish is in very serious danger on the island of Ireland. Nationalist Québec's relationship with Acadia is complicated and widely varying; the students in Pierre Perrault's film *L'Acadie, L'Acadie?!?* (1971) talk about Québec as though it was some kind of promised land, but as we have seen, Marcel Martin paints a very different picture of French-speakers outside Québec. While the Gaeltacht regions have often been the subject of indifference on the part of the Dublin government, and in the 60s had their own civil rights movement (which I will briefly discuss in chapter two), their status as part of the nation-state of Ireland has never been in question. Whatever insecurity might have defined Québec culture before the 1960s, it now seems very clear that French-speaking Québec can exist without a French-speaking Moncton; Ireland, however, would suffer a devastating blow to its sense of national identity if Irish were to disappear entirely. The degree of connection between these two centres and two margins, and the degree to which the connection is symbolic of a now-lost sense of national cohesion based in language (Anderson writes that "from the start the nation was conceived in language, not in blood" [145]) is considerably different.

As a result of massive emmigration as much as anything else, there has developed a very fluid, almost borderless view of who is Irish; this concept has sometimes been described as the "Fifth Province." Historically, Ireland has always had four provinces, but the Irish word for province, "coiced," means fifth. The concept of the "Fifth Province," was a central part of the re-vitalisation of Irish critical theory, and was at the core of the first editorial of the influential journal *The Crane Bag*. The editors of that journal write in that editorial that:

> There must be a no-man's land, a neutral ground where things can detach themselves from all partisan and prejudiced connection and show themselves for what they really are.... Although Tara was always the political centre of Ireland, this middle or fifth province acted as a second centre, which although non-political, was just as important, acting as a necessary balance. It was sometimes described as a secret well, known only to the druids and *fili* [poets or bards]. These two centres acted like

> two kidneys in the body of the land. The balance between the two was guarantor of peace and harmony in the country as a whole. (10)

Richard Kearney, one of the editors of *The Crane Bag* and so one of the authors of that editorial, expanded that definition in *Postnationalist Ireland*. He writes that the Fifth Province "may be re-envisaged today as a network of relations extending from local communities at home to migrant communities abroad. The Fifth Province is to be found, if anywhere, at the swinging door which connects the 'parish' (in Kavanagh's sense) with the 'cosmos'" (100). Without wanting to jump too heavily into these kinds of arguments, I think that one crucial difference in national identity between Ireland and Québec can be summed up by pointing out that there is no comparable "fifth province" in Québec; a similar spacial metaphor is hard to come up with. As we will see in chapter three, some versions of the concept of *L'Américanité* provide a possible parallel to these kinds of statements about inter-nationalism and Québécois identity, although the metaphor is of sprawling space, not of a fixed point.

Finally, then, what seems important to this work is the conflicted nature of the relevant discourse, and a sense that Ernest Gellner's scepticism, his "middle position" on the question of nationalism, a position that has recently been echoed by the Nobel-Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen, is perhaps the most organic. Gellner writes that "our position on the necessity/contingency issue is in the middle; it denies each of these extremes, and affirms that nationalism is indeed necessary in certain conditions (to be specified), but these conditions themselves are not universal" (13). This matter of contingency is central to Irish and Québec nationalism. Whether someone is Irish or Québécois, while certainly influenced by a concrete (universal?) factor like territory, is finally a matter of contingency, of consent (this is particularly the case in Québec and Northern Ireland). This issue of consent is, Amartya Sen argues, crucial to a reasonable sense of social cohesion. Rejecting the claims of those whom he calls "communitarians," he writes that:

> The reality of identity choice is important in assessing the increasing trend toward cultural separatism that has emerged in recent years with the rise of communitarian reasoning. One of the claims that many communitarians have made is that our identity is a matter of self-realization, and thus not really a matter of choice.... This claim... has to be rejected. There is truth, of course, in the realization that the culture in which one is born and bred can leave a lasting impact on one's perceptions and predispositions; but this does not imply that a person is not able to modify or reject antecedent associations.
> (26-27)

While I sense some elements of a backlash against American and British identity politics in Sen's arguments, I also sense much of Gellner's scepticism about the solidity of national formations and national identity. Consent is indeed a defining characteristic in pluralist, sometimes divided places like Ireland and Québec, and it presents something of a challenge to simple definitions of territorial or ethnic nationalism.

Indeed, what my work here definitely does not seek to do is give a history of the national cinemas of Québec and Ireland. Definitions of the concept of "national cinema" vary widely, but I am most convinced by Andrew Higson's assertion that "it is inadequate to reduce the study of national cinemas only to consideration of the films produced by and within an particular nation-state. It is important to take into account the film culture as a whole, and the overall institution of cinema..." (44). This inevitably means considering issues such as the presence or absence of local commercial cinematic practices, the degree to which film making is intertwined with other national formations and other nation-states, or the degree to which it is intertwined with other media (especially television). I think that Higson overstates the degree to which reception needs to be centralised in studies of national cinemas (he calls for studies which focus "on the activity of national audiences and the conditions under which they make sense of and use the films they watch" [36]). Nonetheless, this kind of work does need to include, where relevant, films which strongly influence a national cinema without really being part of it. A history of Irish cinema should include *The Quiet Man* or *Man of Aran*; a history of Québec cinema should include *I Confess*, the 1953 Alfred Hitchcock film shot in Québec City. I'm not sure, though, how much either one would really need to consider the reception of *Star Wars* in those countries, which would be an example of the kind of reception-oriented study that Higson seems to be calling for, although I would acknowledge that the kinds of worldwide changes in marketing and production that *Star Wars* led have had a significant impact on the evolution of industries and institutions, both of which a national cinema history would need to deal with from an international and historical perspective. I would agree, then, that the task of really describing a national cinema is a bigger one than is often acknowledged; it is not impossible, but it is quite a bit more complex than pointing to those filmmakers, who explicitly or implicitly engage with some sort of national imaginary.

Higson never really offers a definition of "national cinema," and most scholars tend to dance around the question, knowing one when they see one but (perhaps wisely) failing to set specific boundaries between a national cinema and a "regional tradition" or some such thing. Why does Québec have national cinema but not Newfoundland? Why Québec and not Texas? Part of this is simply a matter of an informal scholarly consensus. Québec cinema is often, although not always, treated as a national cinema. The relevant literature in French certainly does this: *Le Dictionnaire du cinéma québécois* and Yves Lever's *Histoire générale du cinéma au Québec* are good examples, confidently offering a history that is mostly autonomous and does not rely on a wider Canadian context, any more than a history of Mexican cinema would rely on the traditions of South American film making. Much of the English-language work written by foreigners also adopts this world-view: this is the case with *Essays on Québec Cinema*, edited by American Joseph Donahue Jr., and *Québec National Cinema*, by Scotsman Bill Marshall (who writes in his introduction that "Québec certainly is a nation and has a national cinema" [x]). Much English-language work by Canadians, however, treats Québec cinema as a part of a larger Canadian cinema: Seth Feldman's and Joyce Nelson's *Canadian Film Reader,* Feldman's *Take Two* and Peter Harcourt's *Movies and Mythologies* are examples of this tendency from the first generation of Canadian film scholars, and the recent anthology *Gendering the Nation* is an example from a younger group (the singular "nation" of the book's title is Canada, although the films discussed are in English, French and Cree). I believe that this English-Canadian tendency is misguided. It is logical, as Marshall writes, to speak of Québec cinema as a national cinema, just as we can speak of Scottish Cinema or Welsh Cinema as national cinemas not necessarily part of "British Cinema" (although they *could* be considered as such) or of a Palestinian cinema that cannot be meaningfully collapsed into a larger "Israeli Cinema," no matter how pluralist. Furthermore, Québec cinema has more autonomous institutions (funding bodies such as SODEC) and a more diverse tradition of film making (including highly developed documentary, governmental and commercial and semi-commercial narrative sectors, in addition to an underdeveloped but present avant garde sector) than both these smaller national cinemas I have just invoked and other fully-fledged nation-state-linked national cinemas, such as Dutch cinema, Austrian cinema, or Syrian cinema. Reading Philip Mosely's history of Belgian cinema, I can see how Canadian film scholars might be tempted to adopt his model of a "split screen," a model that does (very reluctantly) acknowledge a semi-unitary national cinema in Belgium. Mosely writes that "[s]ince the Flemish and the French-language cinemas of Belgium may each claim individual histories yet together constitute what passes for a Belgian national cinema, Belgian film historiography, contingent on this dialectic of unity and duality, becomes a highly problematic subject" (5). But I would resist the liberal (and, in Canada, Liberal) tendency to cheerfully recognise Québec as distinct while conscribing the question of whether Québec has a national cinema to the realm of the unresolvable ambiguities of nationalism. This is a fine strategy for a cinema as marginalised as Belgium's (not to mention Flanders'), but really seems inappropriate for a cinema as highly developed as Canada's or Québec's.

But although I have performed a kind of separation in the establishment of Québec as a national cinema, I would tend to perform a kind of unifying when it comes to Irish cinema. For while many of the films that I deal with here that are from Northern Ireland display a cultural distinctiveness that set them apart from the films from the Republic, I would tend to classify this not as an example of a separate, Northern national cinema but as a tradition of regionalism in Irish film making (as I do, in chapter three, in the case of John T. Davis). This contention need not have anything to do with a Republican or Unionist stance, any more than a belief in a Québec national cinema need have anything to do with a position on Québec separatism. As I discuss in chapter seven, until very recently film making in Northern Ireland was non-existent outside of a few BBC productions and some American- and British-produced films about The Troubles. Even now there is very little film making in Northern Ireland that does not happen without some kind of participation from institutions in the Republic (either Radio Telefis Éireann or Bord Scannán na hÉireann). Very little film making in Northern Ireland avoids either explicit reference to the Republic or implicit reference to it through the war that is being fought over whether to join it or stay separate from it (John T. Davis' films are an exception here, as is Thaddeus O'Sullivan's *December Bride* [1989]). There is less sense of inter-locked-ness between Québec cinema and Canada; there are plenty of institutions that exist only in Québec, and while many Québec films deal with English Canada, there are plenty that don't engage with the topic at all. The development of a national cinema in Northern Ireland is not an inconceivable prospect, any more than is the development of a

Flemish national cinema, or a Faroese one. But just as Flemish cinema as it stands is hard to separate from Belgian cinema, and the very few Faroese films that have been produced (such as *Faith, Hope and Witchcraft* [Erik Balling, 1960], or Katrin Ottarsdóttir's films *Atlantic Rhapsody* [1989] and *Bye-Bye-Blue Bird* [1999]) are sensibly considered, for the time being, part of Danish cinema, it seems to me that the institutional status and the thematic preoccupations of films made in Northen Ireland, despite their meaningful distinctiveness, are best considered as part of an Irish national cinema.

Gilles Deleuze's and Félix Guattari's work on "minor literature" offers a case study in the ways that the ambiguities of national formation play out in the cultural sphere, and while I do not think the work challenges the legitimacy of Irish or Québec cinema as national cinemas, their concerns are highly relevant to the kind of film history I am trying to write here. They lay out three defining characteristics of "minor literature," writing that:

> Une littérature mineure n'est pas celle d'une langue mineure, plutôt celle qu'une minorité fait dans une langue majeure. Le premier caractère est de toute façon que la langue y est affectée d'un fort coefficient de déterritorialisation.... Le second caractère des littératures mineures, c'est que tout y est politique.... [S]on espace exigu fait que chaque affaire individuelle est immédiatement branchée sur la politique.... Le troisième caractère, c'est que tout prend une valeur collective.
> (29-31)
>
> [A minor literature is not that of a minor language, but is instead that of a minority written in a major language. But the first characteristic is that the language is in every way affected by a strong co-efficient of de-territorialisation.... The second characteristic of minor literatures is that everything is political... Its cramped space makes each individual affair immediately linked to politics... The third characteristic is that everything takes on a collective value.]

While Kafka forms the core of their argument, they also include Joyce and Beckett as examples of writers using language (of English and French in the case of Beckett, and "de l'anglais et de toute langue chez Joyce" [35]); the concept of "minor literature" does indeed seem quite organic with Ireland's linguistic and literary history. And Bill Marshall has used the minor literature schema as a way to explain Québec cinema, writing that "Québec artists of the 1960s, to take another example, were conscious that their language was not only 'minor' in relation to the language of the vast North American and Canadian Anglophone majority, but was peripheral and relatively de-territorialized vis-à-vis the 'major' language that is standard metropolitan French" (12-13).

There are certainly problems with this schema and its usefulness for Irish and Québec cinema. I understand that Déleuze and Guattari, especially through their use of the concept of "de-territorialisation," are describing a literary tradition that is much less culturally rooted than the films that are the subject of this work (there is quite a gap between James Joyce and Bob Quinn). Furthermore, Déleuze and Guattari's insistence on the inherently political and collective nature of minor literature is an obvious influence on Fredric Jameson's widely discussed article "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," which formulates Third World literature as having inherent value as a national allegory; I am highly suspicious, as are the many critics who have assailed Jameson on this point (such as Aijaz Ahmad in his book *In Theory*), of these kinds of sweeping generalisations. So I would emphasise that Québec and Ireland have small popular, semi-commercial sectors in both film and television (although Québec's sectors are much more developed than Ireland's), producing films that have widely varying degrees of political, social or national significance. I do not want to argue along Jamesonian lines that Québec and Irish films have inherent value as national allegories. In this work, however, I will be engaging mostly with films that have such value, by way of explaining the emergence of a critical cinematic practice that is radical in spirit and moderate in approach.

The potential confusion between "minor" in Deleuzo-Guattarian terms and "minor" in terms of reach and influence reminds me a bit of the confusion over definitions of national cinema, a confusion that has a particular link to Québec cinema. Susan Barrowclough, in the introduction to the book accompanying the British Film Institute's 1981 retrospective of Jean-Pierre Lefebvre (the subject of chapter one), tries to place Lefebvre, and Québec cinema generally, among the cinemas "to be found in those Third World countries which recently won their independence (Algeria, Senegal) or which liberated themselves from right-wing political regimes (Cuba, Portugal) or which enjoyed short periods of political liberalisation (Brazil, Czechoslovakia). In all these cases radical political change and new cultural expression converged" (3). Defining the slippery term "national cinema," which she sees as particularly prevalent in such places, she writes that:

> ...national cinemas are marked by what could be called a *use* value – use either in an immediate political struggle, for instance, or in an ongoing and changing search for cultural identity.... For these national cinemas, the struggle for national self awareness and the recognition of difference and oppositions within this, are as much in the subjects they choose to make of, as the questions they ask of conventional narrative, point of view, use of stars, etc.
> (5)

Michel Brûlé, although he does not address the concept of "national cinema" directly, is looking for a similar set of problems in the films of Pierre Perrault; his study is entitled *Pierre Perrault, Ou un cinéma national.* Lefebvre himself has written on the concept of national cinema, and he is pre-occupied by similar issues. Discussing national cinema as a tradition of film making that is in touch with what is going on in the life of the nation from which it springs, he writes that:

> Pensez également *à tous les réalisateurs* qui incarnent le concept même de cinéma national: Renoir, Ford, Hawks, Buñuel (trois nations), Eisenstein, Mizoguchi, Kobayashi, Bergman, Lang, Wenders, Resnais, Griffith, De Sica, Fellini... Vous constaterez que non seulement *les histoires qu'il racontent appartiennent à, viennent de leur milieu ambiant*, mais encore que la FORME dans et par laquelle ils les transmettent est l'*amalgame* réussi entre les *spécificités du milieu* et l'*émotion* d'y vivre, l'émotion d'appartenir à un coin de terre, à un rivage, une montagne, un lac, un océan, des saisons, des êtres humains.
> (1986:92, emphases and ellipses his)
>
> [Think also of *all the directors* who embody the very concept of national cinema: Renoir, Ford, Hawks, Buñuel (three nations), Eisenstein, Mizoguchi, Kobayashi, Bergman, Lang, Wenders, Resnais, Griffith, De Sica, Fellini... You will see that not only *the stories that they tell belonging to, come from the place they live in,* but also that the FORM in and through which they transmit them is a successful *amalgamation* between the *specificities of a place* and the *emotion* of living there, the emotion of belonging to a corner of earth, to a shore, a mountain, a lake, an ocean, seasons, human beings.]

Lefebvre is embarking on a critical project similar to Barrowclough's, looking for a practice of film making that is tied to a sense of place (and possibly, although not necessarily, of nation), a practice that confounds binarisms like Hollywood-versus-European-Art-Cinema or Commercial-versus-Personal film making. It is a view of film history that is admirably open-minded, seeing Hawks, Eisenstein, Ford, and Fellini as all having a common project. But the "national cinema" that he is discussing is not necessarily the same thing as "a national cinema," which is quite broad, but instead closer to Third Cinema, regionally aware cinema, or even counter-cinema, which are all possible parts of the larger structure that is a national cinema (just as poetry, novels, prose-poems, and political essays would be part of a national literature). I think that this blindness to the potential diversity of a national cinema, a diversity that could include non-political, non-engaged-with-the-national-self films, is the main weakness of Barrowclough's formulation. India provides a particularly good example of a fully diversified national cinema, with a huge commercial sector (the largest in the world), a substantial tradition of critical political film making, a small avant garde sector, and an internationally recognised auteur cinema of widely varying political content (embodied by Satyajit Ray). India's commercial cinema certainly has a "use value": the films are very useful in terms of economic development, for instance. And it could even be argued that Indian commercial cinema has a kind of national use value, telling stories of a recently colonised and still economically underdeveloped country in a cinematic and spoken language local to India. Much the same could be said of Québec's popular cinema, perhaps embodied by films like *Les Boys* I ,II, III and IV (Louis Saïa 1996-2003). But rather than searching for a kind of "usefulness," I think that both Barrowclough and Lefebvre are actually trying to name a film making practice that is politicised, nationally aware, perhaps even "mineur" in a Deleuze-Guattari kind of way. Such work is actually a strand of various national cinemas; such a strand of political film making does not itself constitute a "national cinema." While most of my own comparisons in this work are of films that are indeed politically aware and engaged with national identity, I do not hold such work to be synonymous with "a national cinema," as Barrowclough does. I also wouldn't call this film making "national cinema," as Lefebvre does; although I see what he is getting at with that phrasing, I would avoid that term largely because it seems too open to confusion.

What I sense from a lot of usage of the term "national cinema" is a desire for a more flexible, achievable idea of Third Cinema, something indeed closer to the kind of Deleuzeo-Guattarian "minor cinema" that I will for the most part be looking at in this work, and this kind of negotiation has tremendous importance to both Irish and Québec Cinema. The concept of Third Cinema emerged from the manifesto "Towards a Third Cinema," written by Argentine Fernando Solanas and Spaniard Octavio Gettino in 1971. That work broke film making practices into three camps: first cinema (Hollywood), second cinema (apolitical Art Cinema, but also smaller commercial cinemas like Argentina's), and the cinema they called for, "a cinema outside and against the system... a cinema of liberation: the *third cinema*" (52). The kind of idealism that this moment represented – wherein cinema was a weapon in the war against colonialism, potentially available to and important for anyone interested in radical political change, regardless of aesthetic predisposition – has mostly passed. One somewhat cynical assessment of the situation is Stephen Croft's assertion that "recently, Third Cinema abuts and overlaps with art film's textual norms and, its militant underground audience lost, seeks out art cinema's international distribution-exhibition channels" (53). But closer to the mark, and more useful for my purposes here, is Teshome Gabriel's description of the evolution of Third Cinema into a "guardian of popular memory." Writing about Miguel Littin's film *Acta general de Chile* (1985), he explains that the film "blends typically disparate categories along three axes: 1) the constitution of the subject which is radically different from a Western conception of the individual; 2) the non-hierarchical order, which is differential rather than autonomous; 3) the emphasis on collective social space rather than transcendental individual space. I believe that these axes, which predominate in popular memory, resonate with the cultural expression indigenous to most of the Third World today" (59). This kind of broad thematic analysis is a long way from the fiery rhetoric of what we see in "Towards a Third Cinema," and it strikes me as more organic to the way that film making has actually evolved in the post-colonial or Third worlds. But what is lost in Gabriel's schema is the broad internationalism of Solanas and Gettino, who are clearly focussed on what is traditionally thought of as the Third World, but who also freely invoke filmmakers in the United States, France, Italy and Japan, among other places. One of the crucial aspects of the concept of Third Cinema is that it was not necessarily linked to the Third World; it was about the adaptation of a formal and political strategy, and that could be done *anywhere.* The means to describe and contextualise political, engaged film making from all over the world is indeed a hole in film history; "Third Cinema" is too idealistic, and while the work of Third World filmmakers is obviously inspirational in this department, it is too often discussed as a strict function of their status as a product of an economically underdeveloped region (this film was made by a filmmaker in Malaysia/Chile/Burkina Faso/Iraq, so what would white filmmakers in Ireland/Québec/Greece/Portugal possibly have in common with it?).

Paul Willemen has eloquently railed against this tendency, and I think his considerations on the topic, given their relevance to the kind of cinema that I am describing here, are worth quoting at length. Recalling the programs at the Edinburgh Film Festival he helped organise, he writes that:

> The notion of Third Cinema (and most emphatically not Third World Cinema) was selected as a central concept in 1986, partly to re-pose the question of the relations between the cultural and the political, partially to discuss whether there is indeed a kind of international cinematic tradition which exceeds the limits of both the national-industrial cinemas and those of Euro-American as well as English cultural theories.
>
> The latter consideration is still very much a hypothesis relating to the emergence on an international scale of a kind of cinema to which the familiar realism *verus* modernism or post-modernism debates are simply irrelevant, at least in the forms to which Western critics have become accustomed. This trend is not unprecedented, but it appears to be gaining strength. One of its more readily noticeable characteristics seems to be the adaptation of a historically analytic, yet culturally specific, mode of cinematic discourse. It is best exemplified by, for instance, [Israeli] Amos Gitai's work, [the English workshop] Cinema Action's *Rocinante* (1986), [Greek Theo] Angelopoulos's *O Thiasos* (1975), the films of [Malian] Souleyman Cisse, [Ethiopian-American] Hailie Gerima and [Senegalese] Ousmane Sembene, [Indian] Kumar Shahani's *Maya Darpan* (1972) and *Tarang* (1984), [Germans Gerhard] Theuring and [Ingemo] Engström's *Fluchtweg Nach Marseille* (1977), the work of [Senegalese] Safi Faye, the recent films of [Egyptian] Yusif Chahine, [Taiwainese] Yang De-Chang's (Edward Yang's) *Taipei Story*, [Chinese] Chen Kaige's *Yellow Earth* (1984), the work of [Hong-Kong-er] Fong Yuk-Ping (Allen Fong), the two black British films *Handsworth Songs* (1986) and The *Passion of Remembrance* (1986) and the Brazilian films of Joaquim Perdo de Andrade and Carlos Reichenbach.
>
> The masters of this growing but still threatened current can be identified as Nelson Pierra dos Santos, Ousmane Sembene and Ritwik Ghatak, each summing up and reformulating the encounter of diverse cultural traditions into new, politically as well as cinematically illuminating types of filmic discourse, critical of, yet firmly anchored in,

> their respective social-historical situations. Each of them has refused to oppose a simplistic notion of national identity or of cultural authenticity to the values of colonial or imperial predators. Instead, they have started from a recognition of the many-layeredness of their own cultural-historical formations, with each layer being shaped by complex connections between intra- and inter-national forces and traditions. In this way, these three film-makers exemplify a way of inhabiting one's culture which is neither myopically nationalist nor evasively cosmopolitan.
> (177)

This is the cultural space that all of the films I discuss in this work occupy (or, in a few cases, appear to occupy); between Third Cinema and Art Cinema, between the commercial and the non-commercial, between classical/realist/conventional and avant garde. The filmmakers I discuss in this work have both nationalist and internationalists aspirations, existing between the local and the globalising. Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, Bob Quinn and Pierre Perrault fit very well the description that Willemen accords to dos Santos, Sembene and Ghatak, and filmmakers like Margo Harkin, Michel Brault, Pat Murphy, Jacques Godbout, John T. Davis, Cathal Black, Denys Arcand, and even, in some cases, Neil Jordan, could very comfortably sit beside the others that Willemen lists.

The strands of Irish and Québec cinema that these filmmakers represent belong not alongside films and national cinemas with which they happen to share a linguistic identity (such as French or British cinema), but alongside marginalised, emerging national cinemas like Israel's, Brazil's, or Greece's, or alongside trans-national filmmakers who exist on the edge of world cinema. What I want to do in this work is not to simply describe Irish and Québec cinema, but to illustrate the ways that many of the filmmakers working within these two national cinemas have internalised these concerns and often given them exceptionally eloquent voices.

Notes:

1. Anyone who has been to the monument at Grosse-Île, Québec, the main immigrant processing station for Canada until the end of the 19th century, is aware of how important the Irish were to Québec's development. Indeed, that monument is now called "Grosse-Île-et-le-Mémorial-des-Irlandaises" The leading scholar of the Île's history and the Irish connection to it is Sr. Marianna O'Gallagher, who acted as a consultant to Parks Canada/Parcs Canada when the Île was being transformed into a formally constituted monument; see especially her *Grosse-Île: Gateway To Canada / Grosse-Île: Port d'entrée du Canada* (Québec: Carraig Books, 1987). Robert Grace has compiled a wide-ranging survey of the relevant history of Irish immigration to Québec; see his *The Irish in Québec: Introduction to the Historiography* (Québec: Institut Québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1997). Tensions between locals and Irish immigrants, and sectarian tensions between Catholic and Protestant Irish immigrants in Québec, are the subject of Madeline Ferron's novel *Sur le chemain craig* (Montréal: Stanké, 1983), set in the 19th century. And this history has even worked its way onto the funny pages; in Lynn Johnston's syndicated comic strip *For Better or for Worse*, Michael and his roommate Weed travel to small-town Québec as part of their work writing a history of an Irish family. "Most of the people here speak French, and some speak Gaelic as well!" marvels Michael, at the big family *ceile* that concludes their research. The sequence is re-printed in Johnston's collection *The Big 5-0* (New York: Andrews McMeel, 2000), pp.31-36. The only exception to this immigration-oriented tendency that I know of is the poetry collection edited by Fulvio Caccia and John F. Deane, *Voix d'Irlande et du Québec / Voices from Ireland and Québec* (Montréal: Éditions du Noroît / Dublin: Dedalus, 1995). In the introduction, Caccia argues that in the life of Québécois poet Émile Nelligan, whose father was Irish and mother Québécoise, "we find her, in parable form, the condition itself of Québeckers: torn between two languages, two continents" (9), but there is no sustained engagement in this introduction with a comparative analysis of the two cultures. Interestingly, I believe that it is Jacques Ferron's melancholy, mystical novel *Le Salut de l'Irlande* that gives the one of the most explicit, clearly thought-out comparisons of Ireland and Québec in either English or French; I discuss it later in this introduction. I would point out, though, that this novel also has some relationship to the narrative of immigration (its main character C.D.A. is an Anglo-Quebecker of Irish ancestry).

2. Generally, I think the words Britain and British are used much too freely. I prefer England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, etc., except to refer specifically to the entire island of Great Britain (which I do not have much cause to do in this work). I also prefer the term UK to refer to the political entity comprised of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (officially known as "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland"), although I am not opposed to Tom Nairn's jokey appellation "Ukania." The exception I generally make is that I use the term British Colonialism; whatever inaccuracies or inexactitude I think the term has, I prefer it to awkward (or made-up-sounding) terms like "English Colonialism" or "UK Colonialism," which are not in general use.

3. Maurice Duplessis was Première Ministre / Premier of Québec from 1936-1959, with a brief period out of power in the 1940s. The period is known as "the great darkness" because Duplessis' reign was defined by a rigid, racist and anti-Semitic nationalism, with Québec's social and cultural life being controlled by the Catholic church and its economic life being controlled by an Anglo capitalist élite. The Quiet Revolution is generally acknowledged to have begun when Duplessis died in office in 1959. A possible Irish comparison is the brief life (1921-1948) of the Free State of Ireland, which was created upon the conclusion of the War of Independence in lieu of the fully independent Republic which nationalists badly wanted but to which the London government was resolutely opposed. This period in Ireland's history is similarly known for being marked by a culturally stifling, semi-totalitarian nationalism, and by tremendous economic underdevelopment. Comparisons between that State's big man, Éamon deValera (who was either Taoiseach/Prime Minister or Uachtaráin/President from 1932-1979) and Duplessis are problematic, though; deValera may have had plenty of reactionary tendencies, but it is difficult to imagine Maurice Duplessis taking a leadership role in a nascent League of Nations, as deValera did.

4. Irish Gaelic is usually called "Irish;" to say "Gaelic" generally refers to Scottish Gaelic, which is very similar to Irish but by no means the same language. There is also a Manx Gaelic, similar to the other two Gaelics, native to the Isle of Man. Manx, as it is usually called, is more or less dead, the last native speakers having passed on to that big Gaeltacht in the sky in the 1950s. It is currently undergoing a modest revival by Celtic enthusiasts on the Isle.

5. Article 8.1 of the *Bunreacht na hÉireann / Constitution of Ireland* reads "Ós í an Ghaeilge an tenga náisiúnta is í an phríomhthenga oifigiúil í / The Irish language as the national language is the first official language." The English text of Article 8.2 reads "The English language is recognised as a second official language," although the Irish text reads "Glactar leis an *Sacs-Bhéarla* mar theanga oifigiúil eile." The emphasis is mine, as the term "Sacs-Bhéarla" literally means "Saxon English." This term is there partially because "Sacs-Bhéarla" is an archaic usage, and such usage is of course common to documents like national constitutions; part of this, though, seems to be an extra dig at English, a way of linking it to a foreign past.

6. In this work "Ireland" is meant to refer to the entire island of Ireland. "The Free State" refers to the Free State of Ireland, in existence from 1921-1948, "The Republic" refers to the Republic of Ireland (also known as Éire), the fully independent country that replaced the Free State in 1948, and "Northern Ireland" or "NI" refers to Northern Ireland, a province of the United Kingdom whose political status is still in flux.

7. All that said, chapter two deals with Bob Quinn, who makes films mostly set in Irish-speaking communities, and Pierre Perrault, who has made a number of films about l'Île-aux-coudres, films in which the language spoken by the islanders is very important. While I would still encourage readers to be sceptical of simple French-Irish comparisons, I do think that there is an exception to be made in Perrault's case. The variant of French spoken on l'Île-aux-coudres is, as I will discuss in that chapter, highly unusual, and part of Perrault's project is to illustrate that it is part of a culture forgotten by the metropolitan centre, who both claims their life as part of a national myth but is unable to understand them, sometimes literally unable to understand what they are saying (and this is illustrated by the fact his first film, *Pour la suite du monde,* was released by the NFB/ONF with *French* subtiitles). Bob Quinn is doing something very similar; it is already not terribly likely that urbanites would be able to understand spoken Irish, but even less likely that they would understand the Conamara dialect that is spoken in his film *Poitín*. I understand that the socio-linguistic details do not exactly line up, but I will

show in chapter two that there are some compelling linkages in how these two filmmakers use language as a way of critiquing simple nationalism.

8. One of the most important developments in Irish Studies of the last decade or so is the embrace of a post-colonial analysis; Seamus Deane has certainly been part of this, but more explicit engagements with this body of work have come from Declan Kiberd (with *Inventing Ireland*) and Luke Gibbons (with *Transformations in Irish Culture*). Indeed, Gibbons has savaged other post-colonialists' disengagement with the Irish history of colonialism, especially that of Australians Bill Ashcroft, Garreth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. Dismissing Irish (and Scottish and Welsh) claims to post-colonial identity, they wrote in the introduction to their collection *The Empire Writes Back* that "their subsequent complicity in the British imperial enterprise makes it difficult for colonized peoples outside Britain to accept their identity as post-colonial;" presumably they can only aspire to the kind of brotherhood that Australians, whose government has repeatedly refused to make *any treaties whatsoever* with its Aboriginal population, feel with "colonized peoples outside Britain" (cited in Gibbons 1996b:174). At any rate, Gibbons responds that:

> This remarkable statement (which does not appear to include Ireland as one of those countries "outside Britain") only makes sense if one identifies the Irish historically with the settler colony in Ireland, the ruling Anglo-Irish interest, thus erasing in the process the entire indigenous population – a view closer, in fact, to "Commonwealth" than post-colonial literature. This indiscriminate application of the term "post-colonial" is indeed a recurrent feature of *The Empire Writes Back*, with the result that Patrick White and Margaret Atwood are considered post-colonial in the same way as Derek Walcott or Chinua Achebe. (1996:174).

This is indeed a major problem within post-colonial studies, one that has begun to be addressed. Irish Studies, although a historically conservative and often insular discipline, has been revitalised in part by the eagerness of some of its best critics to enter into this fray.

9. Scott MacKenzie has argued that Québec is notable for the way that it has used cinema (if not always cinema produced in Québec) as part of public discussion, writing that "the latent potential of an alternative public sphere has been at the heart of French Canadian and Québécois cinema since the *fin de siècle*." See his "A Screen of One's Own: Early cinema in Québec and the public sphere, 1906-28," *Screen* 41:2 (Summer 2000), p.184. For a discussion of the role of travelling film exhibitors/lecturers in Québec during the silent era, see Pierre Véronneau, "The Creation of a Film Culture by Travelling Exhibitors in Rural Québec Prior to World War II," *Film History* 6:2 (1994), pp.250-60.

10. The borders of Northern Ireland were drawn with the specific intention of creating and guaranteeing this majority. While some plans for Home Rule included the exemption of the entire province of Ulster, it was finally decided that six of those provinces nine counties would remain part of the United Kingdom. Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal stayed out of the partition, owing to the large number of Catholics in those three counties.

Chapter One:
Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, Irish and Québec Cinema

While his international fame pales in comparison with that of Québec film makers like Denys Arcand or Claude Jutra, Jean-Pierre Lefebvre provides a perfect entry point for a study both of Québec and Ireland's post-1960 national cinema. Lefebvre's work plows a very fertile middle ground between an explicitly political cinema and an intense, lyrical and narrative one. While he's often reasonably thought of as a Godardian, I am also quite persuaded by Michel Euvard's assessment that he is "moins le cousin de Godard que le neveu de Bresson" (334) [less Godard's cousin than Bresson's nephew].

What I want to do in this chapter is examine small parts of Lefebvre's career in terms of what it can tell us about issues important to both Québec and Irish cinema, issues surrounding institutions, the use of landscape, and the relation between ideology and form. The first section will examine the ways that he has dealt with the institutions and production networks that define Québec's national cinema and will sketch the ways that these institutions and the compromises they demand are quite common to other "minor cinemas," such as Brazil's, Portugal's, or Ireland's. These kinds of institutional problems, we will see later in this dissertation, have also been faced by commercial and semi-commercial filmmakers in Québec and Ireland such as Cathal Black, Denys Arcand and Neil Jordan. The second part of the essay deals with the pastoral, a theme that is important to the cinema of both Québec and Ireland, and which Lefebvre has dealt with in ways that illustrate a sense of critical compromise that is very similar to what we see in his interactions with cinematic institutions. The issues that he is wrestling with are also very important in the work of Pierre Perrault and Bob

Quinn. The third section of the chapter deals with the ways that Lefebvre has struggled with counter-cinema. While he was clearly attracted to the possibilities of the radical aesthetics/radical politics merger, his films, like those of Pat Murphy and Michel Brault, and to a lesser extent those of Jacques Godbout and John T. Davis, were never as politically strident or formally difficult as those of his British and European counterparts. Lefebvre's *œuvre* is huge; he has made around 30 films in genres that range from the straightforwardly narrative to the highly experimental. It may, then, seem a mistake to consider such a relatively small number of his films, and exclude some of his most famous altogether (like his trilogy *Il ne faut pas mourir pour ça* [1967], *Le vieux pays ou Rimbaud est mort* [1977] and *Aujourd'hui ou jamais* [1998]). What I am trying to do here, though, is to take a highly selective look through Lefebvre's (almost unmanageable) body of work, in order to tease out some crucial historical factors, thematic concerns and aesthetic and ideological conflicts that will set the stage for the discussion ahead.

The films that I do want to discuss, though, give a sense of how varied Lefebvre's career has been. The section on the pastoral primarily discusses narrative films, but even within these there is considerable variation. *Mon amie Pierrette* (1968), one of the two films Lefebvre made at the NFB/ONF, has a lyrical sensibility, but it is fundamentally a clearly told narrative of two teenagers and their process of self-discovery. *Les Dernières fiançailles* (1973) has shades of narrative, but it is fundamentally a much more rigorous film, telling the story of the death of an old man in a formally intense, basically elliptical way. *Les Fleurs* *sauvages* (1981) is somewhere in-between, having a much clearer narrative than *Les Dernières fiançailles* (it is about what happens when an old woman goes to visit her hippie daughter who lives in the countryside) but also being much more formally innovative, switching, between black and white images, using a shifting narrator, and very long takes. The section on ideology and form draws on a similarly diverse body of films. *Jusqu'au cœur* (1968), the other film that Lefebvre made at the NFB/ONF, is one of Lefebvre's most aggressively avant garde works, drawing upon distancing techniques and occasionally absurd imagery in the service of a meditation on the psychological and political effects of media-filtered violence. But his first feature film, *Le Révolutionnaire* (1965), has a similarly counter-cinematic sense to it, featuring some comically absurd, clearly ironic moments along with a sequence where Lefbevre scratches right onto the film. But its story about the training of a rag-tag band of young guerrillas is much clearer and "illusionist" than anything in *Jusqu'au cœur*. So while I am not dealing with Lefebvre's *œuvre* in a traditionally *auteurist* way (a modus operandi that I adopt throughout much of the rest of this dissertation), the films that illuminate issues important in Irish and Québec cinema do end up giving a fair sense of the diverse but consistently independent quality of his enormous cinematic corpus.

I. Issues around the national cinema

The conflicted meanings of the term "national cinema" are discussed in the introduction, and this chapter will not attempt to re-visit the theoretical basis of this concept. What I do want to do here is discuss in more detail the ways that these arguments can be, and in some cases have been, brought to bear on Lefebvre's work. Lefebvre began to come into his own during a period – the 1960s and 70s – when the experiment that was the French New Wave was being celebrated for its enormous success in re-vitalising France's national cinema and re-evaluated in terms of how its goals and models needed to be revised for the then-emergent cinemas of the post-colonial world (South America, for the most part) and de-colonising world (Africa, for the most part). The reception of Lefebvre's cinema, like that of Québec cinema generally, was very different from that of both the French New Wave and the cinemas of the Third World, although his films embodied some of the rhetoric of both of these cinematic models. Lefebvre, as I think we will see in this chapter, is a radical moderate, always drawing attention to the possibility, and indeed necessity, of a middle practice. The relationship that his cinema has to the project of national cinema building that was underway in the late 1970s is entirely consistent with this perspective of radical moderation.

Film history, which has always had a difficult time making sense of national cinemas outside the Hollywood/European Art Cinema orbit, has not yet come up with a vocabulary that really describes national cinemas like Québec's, or films like Lefebvre's. These films are "independent," but also heavily state-subsidised, political but not really anti-colonial, and formally innovative but not really avant garde. Brazilian Glauber Rocha (more by virtue of his location in Brazil than anything else, it sometimes seems), for example, is generally lumped in with Third Cinema (we see this tendency, for example, in the Robert Stam/Randall Johnson anthology *Brazilian Cinema*); Lefebvre, more by virtue of French being his native language, is often lumped in with the French New Wave (and I will discuss examples of this kind of comparison later in the chapter). Neither of these designations, as I will argue, really explains what is going on in their work. Both of these filmmakers emerged at a time when, around the world, embattled cinemas were trying to assert themselves. If a little more attention had been paid to the finer points of their formal choices and how those choices fit into a program of political and social critique, the history of that global emergence, and the history of similar emergences that followed, would be considerably more nuanced than a kind of 1st/2nd/3rd simplicity allows.

Susan Barrowclough, more than any other critic I know of, has made explicit this connection between Lefebvre's cinema and the emergent cinema of the Third World. In the dossier she compiled to accompany the British Film Institute's 1981 Lefebvre retrospective, she writes that:

> The national cinemas which emerged in the late 1960s in the Third World in particular, but also in developed societies like Quebec struggling for their cultural independence, have had to confront the same set of interconnected dilemmas. First, they have to find a filmic language of their own, at once specific to their own needs and free of the accumulated weight of the cinematic traditions of the USA and Europe. The second dilemma for the film-makers is how to reconcile their desires to speak for both their country and themselves, i.e. to find a form capable of combining national- and self-expression... The third dilemma is how a cinema that aims to speak of a particular social situation can unite concrete social documentation with the more metaphysical portrait of the dreams, emotions and conflicts of characters caught in that experience. (13)

As I discussed in the introduction, Lefebvre himself has made statements that similarly consider a "national cinema" and a Third or insurgent cinema to be synonymous. While such assumptions are highly problematic, what I want to deal with here is the very real tension in much of the emergent cinema of the 1960s and 70s – a tension between didactic and aesthetic impulses. Part of the reason that Lefebvre's work is so appealing to Barrowclough, and so useful for those interested in the emergence of "minor cinemas," both in the Third World or on the fringes of Europe (as I mentioned in the introduction, Barrowclough invokes Portuguese cinema of the late 1970s; one could just as easily invoke Ireland in the 1990s), is that Lefebvre is attempting to find a way around this split, always dealing with the political and social reality of Québec but also refusing to indulge in the inaccessible, anti-narrative strategies so common to political film practice of the 1960s and 70s (particularly in counter-cinema in England and the work that Jean-Luc Godard was doing with the Dziga-Vertov collective). The ways that these strategies were moderated in both Ireland and Québec form the backbone of chapter four, which deals with Pat Murphy's *Maeve* (1982) and Michel Brault's *Les Ordres* (1974). But before either one of these films was made, Lefebvre had been showing how political intervention, formal innovation and narrative accessibility could, perhaps uneasily, co-exist.

One of the heroes of the emergent cinema invoked by Barrowclough was Rocha, who makes for an interesting comparison with Lefebvre. Rocha was the most explicitly political filmmaker of Brazil's *cinema novo*, although he sparred briefly with Jean-Luc Godard over how concerned radical artists should be with the nuts and bolts of film production, distribution and exhibition. While Rocha's cinema has a far more pronounced Marxist/revolutionary tone than anything that Lefebvre ever produced, they share a certain scepticism towards Godard's theoretical posturing. Furthermore, both filmmakers were active in creating a cinematic infrastructure in their home countries. Rocha met Godard while in Rome on one of his frequent trips to try to find international support for a re-vitalisation of the Brazilian film industry, and Lefebvre has acted as an advocate for his national cinema both at the NFB/ONF (as producer of the "premières œuvres" series in the late 1960s) and as the co-owner, with his wife Marguerite du Parc, of the production company Cinak.

Both Rocha and Lefebvre, then, are marked by an (sometimes ambiguous) involvement with a semi-industrial mode of production, an involvement that flew in the face of the left-of-centre orthodoxies of the broader movements with which they are generally associated. Rocha emerged from the highly theoretical "Third Cinema" movement, whose strongest adherents, many of whom were from Latin America, explicitly and inflexibly rejected any connection with their indigenous film industries, some of which (especially in Mexico and Argentina) were quite financially successful. Rocha, on the other hand, seemed to reluctantly accept the capitalist character of popular cinema, making unorthodox films himself but also working from the inside in an attempt to reform and eventually re-create the commercial, and very popular, Latin American cinema.[1] The French New Wave had a basically hostile relationship with France's indigenous cinema, best illustrated by the famous 1954 essay by François Truffaut "Une certaine tendance du cinéma français." This lack of interest in local cinematic practice was perhaps the crucial difference between the French New Wave and Québec's independent cinema of the 1960s and 70s. Bill Marshall notes that:

> ...the French popular audience of the 1950s and 1960s vastly preferred French cinematic production, while much of the intellectual audience was watching American cinema... In Québec, the situation was the reverse. The popular audience, while entranced by indigenous radio and the television representations of Quebec culture, vastly preferred American cinematic product... The arthouse audience looked to Europe and especially France. The emergence of Quebec cinema in the 1960s is riven by these two tendencies: on the one hand a debt to French cinematic models, and on the other the developing quest for a national-popular audience, the new Quebec cinema had to appeal to the notion of a "people" to legitimate its national project. In France, this element as well as the role of Hollywood in the French film market as a whole was studiously ignored by the practitioners of the *nouvelle vague*.
> (83-84)

The relationship between indigenous commercial cinema and an already globalised Hollywood cinema was, then, much more complicated in the case of Québec than of France. Alas, the kinds of differences between the French New Wave and Québec cinema of the 1960s and 70s to which Marshall is drawing attention are not generally part of studies of Québec cinema, which too often lump Québec cinema along with the French New Wave in a way that obscures the very specific cultural climate of Québec (including, as Marshall observes, the presence of popular and locally-produced television and radio programs). I discuss specific instances of this, especially as regards the Godard comparison, a little later in this chapter.

I would, however, take issue slightly with Marshall's characterisation of the situation in Québec. Locally produced serials and télé-romans were important in paving the way for Québec filmmakers like Lefebvre or Denys Arcand; France has no cultural turning point comparable to the establishment of Radio-Canada's television broadcasting in the 1950s. The fact that Québec cinema of the 1960s and 70s is an outgrowth of, and not an explicit reaction against, indigenous cultural production, is a powerful argument that Lefebvre should be thought as being closer to Rocha than he is to Godard (or, for that matter, Bresson), for many of the same reasons that Québec cinema should be thought of as being closer to Brazil's *Cinema Novo* than to the French New Wave. Both Rocha and Lefebvre, after all, are part of a national cinema that has a developed, although mostly regional commercial sector (until the 1970s Brazil's commercial cinema was quite huge, along the lines of Mexico's in the 1930s). They both have some relationship with this sector, as opposed to Godard's complete dismissal of France's popular cinema. Lefebvre and Rocha both understood that some connection with a local film *industry* was a logical, desirable evolution in a national cinema (chapters five and six chart the rise of a semi-commercial and then internationally distributable cinema in Ireland and Québec, and argues that one, to a certain extent, tends to follow the other). Lefebvre (like Rocha) is closer in spirit to the early films of Denys Arcand or the films of Cathal Black than he is to the later Denys Arcand and Neil Jordan, but it is not too much to say that the kind of groundwork that Lefebvre did in Québec, both in terms of the content of his films and the institutions he was part of, is typical of the sort of work that needs to be done for "new cinemas," such as those of Québec and Ireland. And as we will see, Lefebvre is mediating and arguing with important themes and formal experiments, in a way that is very similar to his close but conflicted relationship with the building blocks of a national cinema itself. And one of the themes most important to Québec and Irish cinema that Lefebrve has, like his work with institutions, both engaged with passionately and tried to transform in progressive, forward-looking ways, is the pastoral.

II. Thematic Issues: The pastoral

As in Ireland, the pastoral tradition, across a number of media, is very important in Québec. Lefebvre has, on several notable occasions, engaged with this tradition, an engagement that is very obviously influenced by the work of Pierre Perrault and which is similar to some of the re-evaluation going on in Ireland. While landscape is used in metaphorical and historically loaded ways in Lefebvre's first feature *Le Révolutionnaire*, it is the central pre-occupation of some of his most straightforwardly narrative films, such as *Mon amie Pierrette*, *Les Dernières fiançailles* and *Les Fleurs sauvages*. Lefebvre, in these films, both uses highly composed images of the landscape and tightly integrates the rural setting into his visual and narrative schemas. Even though the Quiet Revolution sought to move away from romantic rural visions, this emphasis on place seems to me entirely consistent with the focus on Québec's distinctiveness that is part of that Revolution (a focus on distinctiveness that, in the next chapter, we also see in the films of Pierre Perrault). At the same time, though, he shows rural areas to be culturally contradictory places. So while Lefebvre always evinces a fascination with non-urban Québec, he is, like Quinn and Perrault, also looking at these regions with a critical eye, struggling to figure out how they interact with modernity, which was a crucial question for Québec as a whole when he started making films.

Mon amie Pierette, the first of two films that Lefebvre directed at the NFB/ONF, works quite self-consciously on two levels; it is both a tender young-love story, and an exploration of the dynamics between generations of Québécois. The film opens with an image of a young student named Yves driving through the Eastern Townships, on his way to see his friend Pierette, with whom he'll spend the day boating. The giddy, vaguely frustrated love that Yves feels for Pierette is made visible right away, and Yves encounters the problems common to this kind of narrative, such as protective parents and a competing suitor, a bohemian, Montréal-based artist/philosopher named Raoul. Pierette's parents are a late-middle aged couple, simultaneously repressive and repressed (if gently on both counts), who live in a semi-rural area. When they are put alongside Raoul, a young man who teaches philosophy at a university, argues politics with his elders, wears ridiculous, polka-dot ties and creates odd, avant garde sculptures, it seems as self-conscious an evocation of the Quiet Revolution as they come. Indeed, Michel Brûlé argues that the parents and Raoul operate in an almost dialectical way, writing that:

> ...le père subit la fascination qu'exerce Raoul; mais aussitôt que celui-ci dépasse le seuil de l'impersonnel, aussitôt que Raoul met en question les valeurs traditionnelles de la patience, de la résignation et de l'expérience, au profit de quelque chose à inventer, d'un autre monde à construire, le père s'enferme dans un refus agressif. C'est l'échec de Raoul.
>
> La mère, cette vigilante gardienne de l'honneur et de la respectabilité, veille sur la fille et domine toute la famille, y compris le

> père qui doit se cacher pour boire son gin. Des trois (Père, Pierette, Yves) elle sera la moins touchée par le passage de Raoul.
> (1971b:49)
>
> [The father is under the influence of the fascination that Raoul exerts; but as soon as the latter passes beyond the impersonal doorstep, as soon as Raoul puts into question the traditional values of patience, resignation and experience, in favour of something yet to come, of another world to build, the father shuts himself away in an aggressive refusal. This is the failure of Raoul.
>
> [The mother, that vigilant guardian of honour and respectability, watches over her daughter and dominates the whole family, including the father who has to hide in order to drink his gin. Of the three (the father, Pierette, Yves), she is the least touched by Raoul's time there.]

I would take issue with this evaluation. The mother is indeed impacted by Raoul's visit, because Lefebvre is, in effect, collapsing the parents into a single icon of traditional Québec society; Raoul serves as the icon of hipster modernity. The (Eisensteinian?) collision of Raoul with Pierrette's parents produces the synthesis of Yves and Pierette, and their confusion and gentle crisis about what direction their lives should take. The Soviet-film-influenced rhetoric I am using here, though, is somewhat inorganic to the feel of the film, which unfolds gradually and without tremendous dramatic tension (let alone fragmented aesthetics). Nevertheless, there is a sense in *Mon amie Pierette* that cultural conflict and transformation are in the air, and that the Eastern Townships, a rural landscape that was slowly becoming gentrified, are serving as the awkward staging ground for that kind of change. In the films from both Québec and Ireland that will be under discussion throughout this work, we will see a great deal of ambiguity and conflict about national and political belonging or identity, and the two characters at the centre of *Mon amie Pierette* are clearly embodiments of that kind of back and forth.

This is not what one expects to find in a film about the countryside of the late 1960s. We saw in the introduction that filmmakers like Frs. Maurice Proulx and Albert Tessier saw a rural landscape as a repository of traditional, anti-modern values. For Lefebvre, however, it is an area where such values, or more exactly the ideology that creates the illusion of such values, is subject to contestation. Just as importantly, though, that embodiment of the "old" Québec is never explicitly rejected. I will argue in the next chapter that both Pierre Perrault and Bob Quinn are evoking remote areas as being lodged in a complex dialogue with modernity; Lefebvre also sees these landscapes as deeply conflicted.

That generational tension becomes more pronounced in his film *Les Fleurs sauvages*, a work that is also conflicted about the place of rural life in post-Quiet Revolution Québec. It centres on a potter named Michèle, married to a photographer named Pierre and with two children from her previous marriage. They live what at first seems a bohemian, hippy-esque life in the countryside. When Michèle's mother Simone comes to visit, a number of unresolved questions about the mother/daughter relationship surface. None of this takes the form of melodramatic fights or even overt conflict. Instead, the film is filled with small misunderstandings and communication failures, evoked in sometimes excruciating detail. An example of such misunderstanding comes when Pierre reprimands his step-daughter for being surly; his mild rebuke seems ineffective, and Simone's voice on the soundtrack talks about how distressed she is to see such disrespectful children. This tension is also revealed when Simone walks into Michèle and Pierre's bedroom, only to find them naked, under the covers, with the kids frolicking around them; she excuses herself, and is obviously something between embarrassed and scandalised. But the most dramatic example of this conflict (rendered in a characteristically low key way, through several patient long takes) comes at an outdoor lunch with Michèle and Pierre's friends; as the assembled couples all recount how they met, Simone recounts how her marriage was arranged, although she stresses that she was never unhappy. "Merci maman," says Michèle, with a pronounced tone of both affection and sadness in her voice. It is the moment in the film when the hyper traditional and sometimes repressive reality of pre-Quiet-Revolution Québec and its differences from the modern society that has since emerged becomes most strikingly clear, although this happens in a way that changes very little throughout the rest of the film, and which is rendered with no cinematic or narrative pyrotechnics. The lunch simply goes on.

As we saw in *Mon amie Pierette*, Lefebvre's view of rural life in *Les Fleurs sauvages* is quite conflicted; what has changed in this film is the pointedness of his political analysis. It is crucial to keep in mind that *Les Fleurs sauvages* was made in 1981, only a year after the first referendum on Québec independence had been defeated (and so it could be seen as something of a post-referendum film; that will be discussed further in the case of Denys Arcand's *Le Déclin de l'empire américan*); *Mon amie Pierette*, by contrast, is from 1967, when the excitement and idealism of the Quiet Revolution was arguably at its peak.

The contrast between young and old was, in 1967, indicative of a longing for cultural transformation, but by 1981 it had become indicative of opportunities not taken, and difficult compromises made. Inter-generational conflict forms the centre of the energy of *Mon amie Pierette*, but there is also serious tension coming from conflict within a given generation (e.g. between Yves and Raoul). There is clearly more solidarity among the younger (which is to say thirtysomething) generation of *Les Fleurs sauvages*, echoing a certain rhetoric about collectivity and shared goals as a nation that was crucial to the politics of the 1960s and 70s. This kind of national solidarity evoked through personal conflict will also be the topic of chapter six, on the later films of Denys Arcand. I will argue in my discussion of *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* that Arcand tends to centralise the personal aspects at the expense of the political and socio-cultural, but I do not think we see similar loss of detail in Lefebvre (as seen through the invocation on the cultural climate of the Duplessis era). And importantly, Lefebvre shows that this solidarity has become something of a problem. One of the reasons that the sequence in which Simone talks about her arranged marriage has such dramatic force is because it disrupts the coziness of the gathering. Simone's presence disrupts the illusion of a genuinely shared experience, and disrupts the idealism of the countryside in which Michèle and Pierre, and presumably their friends, are heavily invested. Everyone seems to be made a bit uncomfortable by Simone's story; it is as though they are searching for a renewed collectivity, centred in a non-capitalist, non-urban space, but they are not really prepared to deal with some of that experience's less politically progressive aspects (such as arranged marriages). Much has been achieved: a lifestyle alternative to the mainstream, a certain emergent commonality among Québécoises, etc. But much has also been lost. What we see in *Les Fleurs sauvages* is that these builders of a modern, rural Québec have little or no ability to communicate with those who were *born* into what they are essentially trying to re-create. This has unhappy implications for even those non-rural nationalists who were struggling to modernise Québec nationalism without any ability to deal with the pronounced and sometimes anti-modern national consciousness that existed in Québec before the Quiet Revolution. I argue in chapter six that in *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*, Arcand is refusing history, obsessing only on the personal and bodily obsessions of his characters; Lefebvre, on the other hand, is showing that refusal by engaging with the history itself, by centralising Simone and showing how she is formed by a history of social conformity and Catholic morality.

If *Mon amie Pierette* sees rural life with a certain idealism and *Les Fleurs sauvages* sees it with a sense of defeat, then Lefebvre's film *Les Dernières fiançailles* can be seen as occupying something of a middle ground. The film is centrally about death, which isn't exactly a happy way to view Québec's rural landscape. But at the same time, *Les Dernières fiançailles* is certainly Lefebvre's most Bressonian film. It is painstakingly put together, photographed and edited with a kind of intensity and emotion that is almost unequalled in Québec's cinema, coming very close indeed to Paul Schrader's definition of a transcendental cinematic practice.[2] While there's no question that *Mon amie Pierette* and *Les Fleurs sauvages* occupy an important place in Lefebvre's *œuvre* and in Québec cinema overall, it is *Les Dernières fiançailles* that forms his most fully realised, and carefully considered, reflection on the meaning of Québec's landscape. The film's narrative is comprised of a very aged man becoming ill and slowly dying; it seems clear that the film is a swan song for a way of life whose time is nearly over. But I want to briefly explore the implications of the two parts of this assertion, that it is about a way of life that is passing on but that it is also a *song*.

Lefebvre told Jean-Pierre Tadros in a 1973 interview for *Cinéma/Québec* that "je tenais... à faire un film qui se rapproche d'une forme musicale absolument pure" (20) [I wanted to make a film that would be as close as possible to an absolutely pure musical form]. *Les Dernières fiançailles* has a very linear structure (a man is diagnosed as sick, he convalesces, he dies) but that narrative seems almost peripheral to the importance of the film. Far more important are the long takes where the elderly couple sits on their porch, or the series of extreme close-ups of the old woman's hands as she plants seeds in her garden. The film isn't exactly non-narrative in a completely avant garde way, but it does resist its own linearity in a fashion that does indeed seem, as Lefebvre said, very musical. It is non-narrative, then, in an almost Bressonian way, focussing intensely on tiny details of images and unfolding in a series of painterly compositions that often draw upon self-consciously complex camera movements and lighting schemes. Part of this sensibility also stems, it seems reasonable to assume, from the films of Pierre Perrault, by 1973 very widely seen by and very influential on Québec filmmakers. As we will see in the chapter partially devoted to him, Perrault films are formally conflicted, forever straddling the fence between documentary/narrative and poetic/non-narrative impulses. Partially as a result of this formal duality, they also project an ambiguous reading of the future of non-urban ways of life. *Les Dernières fiançailles* enunciates a complex view of the Québec countryside and does so through a formal strategy that is quite closely linked to that thematic perspective, a strategy that is much more complex than what we see in *Mon amie Pierette* and *Les Fleurs sauvages*. This is not entirely surprising, since this film, made in 1973, is also part of Lefebvre's most formally rigorous period, being made around the same time as *Jusqu'au cœur* or *Ultimatum* (1974). On a purely formal level, then, *Les Dernières fiançailles* is quite important for the way that it translated the important work done by documentarians like Perrault into semi-narrative terms, a translation that is even more fully realized than *Entre la mer et l'eau douce* (1967), Michel Brault's relatively straightforwardly fictional, linear film about the inhabitants of l'Île-aux-coudres.

But also like the films of Perrault, and of Bob Quinn, *Les Dernières fiançailles* is about how quickly non-urban Québec was changing, and about how a distinct way of life was being lost as a result of those changes. Such concern, of course, is indebted not only to a nostalgia for an economically and culturally simpler world, but also to a version of European Romanticism which has been important to the mythologising of both the New World countries and of Ireland. Lefebvre has a very ambivalent relationship with this tradition. While *Mon amie Pierette* and *Les Fleurs sauvages* might seem to be more open to the reality of modernity and less indebted to either romanticism or nostalgic nationalism, *Les Dernières fiançailles* is also wrestling with, and not simply reproducing, this tradition of representation. Peter Harcourt recognises this self-conscious attitude in the film, writing that:

> The film is naive in both its style and attitudes, a simulation (perhaps) of the naive style in painting. Except that for Lefebvre, it is a naivety quite consciously assumed. Extremely slow paced, the rhythm of the film parallels the distended rhythm of these old people's lives. But the film is not "minimalist" in the manner of *L'Amour blessé*. Its style is not the result of restricted means. When looked at closely, *Les Dernières fiançailles* is full of intricately orchestrated camera movements that are actually more complicated than they might appear. If it is minimalist at all, this is chiefly the result of Lefebvre's desire to preserve in the film a correspondence between real and filmic time.
> (1981:67)

Les Dernières fiançailles admittedly, is not exactly a work of counter-cinema, but Harcourt is quite right to centre on its self-conscious aspects. The film is not only non-classical because it eschews a strict linear strategy, but also because of the way that it so emphasises the landscape (through numerous carefully composed long takes, both of the farmhouse and the surrounding countryside) and so slows down its narrative pacing (again, often through the use of long takes).[3] In *Les Dernières fiançailles*, Lefebvre is trying to cinematically illustrate how removed from the rhythms of modernity his characters are.

One particularly complex camera movement, which tracks along outside of the family house, looks through some windows and then eventually moves into the house itself, is quite self-conscious at the same time that it is a highly composed image that does indeed invite a traditional aesthetic experience along the lines of the naive painting style that Harcourt invokes. Using a camera movement that is so slow and so complex already draws attention to the film's artificial quality, and movements like this one fill the film. But moving past windows and looking into the house, as opposed to putting the viewer inside of the house right away, emphasises the distance between the viewer and the characters; the window pane acts as another frame, reminding the viewer that this is an image, not unmediated reality. Lefebvre draws upon this dualistic form throughout the film, never really allowing his viewer to sink into a voyeuristic spectacle, but still sharing his fascination with the aesthetic possibilities of the very slow life that Rose and Armand lead. It is as though he is saying to his viewer, look how old these people have become, and how old this romantic, painterly aesthetic now seems. But just as Lefebvre (along with many Québec filmmakers of this period, and a good number of post-1960 Irish filmmakers) has never entirely let go of a Romantic nationalism, he is also unable to unproblematically embrace its contradictions. For both Québec and Irish filmmakers, the lure of the pastoral is extremely powerful, which makes it all the more important for its forms to be used carefully.

Indeed, in an impassioned critique of Robin Wood's dismissal of Canadian and Québécois attempts to build a national cinema, Peter Harcourt takes the pastoral as central to post-Quiet-Revolution Québec cinema. He writes that:

> "Mon pays, c'est l'hiver" sang Gilles Vigneault back in the 1960s. In the cinema, it is Jacques Leduc who, more than anyone, is associated with what has been called the "pastoral" tradition in Québécois cinema. It is virtually a Canadian genre. Films like *La chambre blanche*, by Jean-Pierre Lefebvre; *La vrai nature de Bernadette*, by Gilles Carle; *Mon Oncle Antoine*, by Claude Jutra; *J.A. Martin, Photographe*, by Jean Beaudin; *L'Hiver bleu*, by André Blanchard; and, supremely, *La tendresse*

> *ordinaire*, by Jacques Leduc... these films define the boundaries of this distinctly Québécois cinematic tradition... [Denys] Arcand has always been ambivalent about this tradition, invoking it in many of his films but deforming it by sexual violence and political corruption. He refers to it in *Decline* [*of the American Empire*] as if to acknowledge that it was part of the now relinquished separatist desire.
> (1989:21)

We will indeed see, in the chapter dealing with Arcand, the ways that he invokes and then rejects the pastoral tradition. I would argue, following Harcourt's historical narrative but differing somewhat in its specifics, that this kind of invocation and argument is previewed by Lefebvre's work. I take Harcourt's point both about Lefebvre's *La chambre blanche* and about Leduc as the master of the pastoral, but these three Lefebvre films that I have been discussing are equally useful for understanding this tradition. They serve as a neat progression, roughly set off by decades, from idealistic revisionism to rigorously detached tribute to quietly exhausted evocation. This progression not only echoes the path of much Québec and Irish cinema of the 1960s, 70s and 80s/90s, but also, as we will see in the next section of this chapter, is similar to the way that Lefebvre takes on another important strain of film making in Québec, that of Godardian counter-cinema. Furthermore, the way that Lefebvre injects the pastoral with healthy doses of political and cultural reality (not the least of which is the death of the lead character, a death that it is easy to read in metaphorical terms for the death of a traditional rurality), reflects the concerns of many post-1960s Irish filmmakers and critics of Irish cinema. One of those critics, Luke Gibbons, writes of the Irish classics *Man of Aran* and *Ryan's Daughter* (neither of which, importantly, was directed by an Irish person) that:

> Despite the desolate, windswept locations, and the evident destitution of the people, both films conform to one of the key conventions of the pastoral genre which has underpinned idealisations of rural life in literature and the visual arts since antiquity. This involves the absence or elimination of the principle source of rural poverty and degradation: the experience of work and exploitation, the social reality of labour in the face not only of material scarcity but also of profound political and economic divisions.
> (1988:197-8)

Gibbons goes on to invoke Erwin Panofsky's distinction between hard and soft primitivism, but his point about the tendency of works in the pastoral tradition to elide social and economic conditions still stands, and it is highly relevant not only for Irish cinema but for Québec cinema as well, and for the cinema of Jean-Pierre Lefebvre. What we see in all three of these films is an attempt to balance the narrative and illusionist needs of the pastoral with the political and cultural imperatives of a critical, committed cinema, of what Susan Barrowclough would call a "national cinema" (as I explained in the introduction, I do think that this is something of a misunderstanding of the concept of a "national cinema"). As we will see, Lefebvre is also performing a similar kind of balancing act between the political and formal demands of a counter-cinema and the narrative accessibility that a truly populist cinema demands. This kind of balancing is of great concern to many filmmakers in both Ireland and Québec.

III. Ideological and Aesthetic Conflict

The cinematic avant garde, as we will see in the chapter on *Les Ordres* and *Maeve*, underwent a considerable transformation in the 1970s and 80s. To a certain extent this shift took its cue from Godard, and Godard was himself highly influential on the filmmakers of Québec. Several of Lefebvre's films suggest a certain Godardian consciousness, although the ways that they depart from this point of view is highly instructive, and is important for the understanding of "minor cinemas" like Québec's and Ireland's. Godard's films of the 1970s are highly adventurous formally and almost always politically militant. Filmmakers in Great Britain and the United States were greatly influenced by this radical departure from the more accessible films of the French New Wave, and so it could be argued that this influence itself eventually filtered down to the proverbial "colonies," Ireland in the case of England and Canada (French- and English-) in the case of the United States. What I think the "Godardian" films of Lefebvre show us, though, is that this influence is not quite so top-down. By looking at films like *Le Révolutionnaire* and *Jusqu'au cœur*, I will explain how we can see a nascent counter-cinematic strategy, although one that is actually more aggressive (politically and formally) than the Godard of this period. Both the introduction and the chapter on *Les Ordres* and *Maeve* discuss how both Québec and Ireland lack the economy to support a strictly non-commercial cinema. A sense of in-between-ness, of simultaneous influence and revision, is also present in Lefebvre's films, and understanding some of the political possibilities and aesthetic effects of this strategy can shed a great deal of light on the demands that are placed on the national cinemas of both Québec and Ireland.

In trying to puzzle out Lefebvre's indebtedness to a Godardian aesthetic, *Le Révolutionaire* seems especially important, although it's also especially sensitive. Michel Larouche, writing in the French film journal *CinémAction*, has grumbled particularly strongly about the way that Québec filmmakers are often assumed to be imitating Godard. After brushing aside the common assumption that Gilles Groulx's 1964 film *Le chat dans le sac* is a Québec version of Godard's 1966 film *Masculin-Féminin* (the dates say it all, really), he writes that "de façon semblable, quand *Le Révolutionnaire* (Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, 1965) est présenté à Paris, on accuse le réalisateur d'avoir copié *Les Carabiniers* [1963]; mais Lefebvre n'avait pas encore vu *Les Carabiniers* !" (160) [similarly, when *Le Révolutionnaire* was presented in Paris, the filmmaker was accused of copying *Les Carabiniers*; but Lefebvre hadn't yet seen *Les Carabiniers*!]. Larouche's irritation with the sloppiness of Europhile critics and historians is understandable, but there is nevertheless a palatable sense, in both Groulx and Lefebvre, that Godard is present, maybe not because of an imitation of *Masculin-Féminin* and *Les Carabiniers* as such, but certainly through the sense of improvisation that we see in *À Bout de souffle* (1960) and the sense of playfulness that's part ironic, part giddily sincere, such as what we see in *Bande à part* (1964). So while I am well aware of the potential pitfalls of discussing Lefebvre's work, and especially *Le Révolutionnaire*, in Godardian terms (pitfalls that are close to the problems of considering Québec cinema alongside the French New Wave that I dealt with in the introduction), I do think that there is *something* there.

Even after a career of more than thirty years and almost two dozen features (the number of films produced, perfection of a low-budget mode of production and constant formal innovation are important points of contact between Lefebvre and Godard), Lefebvre's first feature length film remains a very instructive guide to his political and formal preoccupations. Lefebvre portrays the entire leftist/separatist project, which was just beginning to gain currency at this very early stage of the Quiet Revolution, as a hopelessly eccentric undertaking. He echoes this formally by invoking a pastoral tradition (this film could have also fit into the pastoral section of this chapter) and then saturating that idyllic landscape with violence of a most cartoonish sort. Overall, then, the film is deeply conflicted, acidically critiquing the foundational myths of both Canadian federalism and Québec separatism, both classical realism and Godardian playfulness. We will see much of this same kind of conflict, both political and aesthetic, in the films discussed throughout this dissertation.

Le Révolutionnaire is set in the Québec woods, and centres on a group of young, armed revolutionaries whose actual goal is never stated outright (it seems vaguely related to Québec separatism, though; the Québec flag flies right by the barn). Their leader is ridiculously strict, imposing increasingly absurd restrictions on his troops in the name of discipline (for a while they are forbidden to urinate; later on they are forbidden to dream). He is very similar to the caricatures that populate Godard's early films; *À Bout de souffle*'s Jean-Paul Belmondo is a gangster, but not really, in much the same way that the military leader in *Le Révolutionnaire* is a General, but not really.

The crucial difference between Godard and Lefebvre, though, is what these non-characters *really* are, or really seem to be pointing to. Belmondo's character is, to use a post-modernist formulation not entirely appropriate to a film from the late 1950s, pure text; he primarily refers to another piece of cinema, not to anything outside of that representational system. Lefebvre's military leader, on the other hand, is dripping with the kind of authoritarian tendencies and moral piety to which the Quiet Revolution was opposed. Indeed, Harcourt argues that the military leader has a clerical sense about him, writing that:

> The Leader is obviously a military figure, but through a variety of visual suggestions he could also be a priest.
>
> At the opening of the film when we see him washing his face, this gesture of washing is more like a gesture of self-baptism than an actual cleansing. Moreover, he always speaks with the confidence of someone who has access to an ultimate authority as if to God. Furthermore, the country house they live in has a little steeple, like a church. Even the garage has a ventilation turret again like a kind of steeple. (9)

What Lefebvre is rejecting, I would argue, is not Clerical authority as such, but rather the authority of the Church, of the state, of the military, or of the often repressive politics of strident nationalism. This sense that the caricatures stand for a larger anxiety about authority figures in general is indeed important in *Les Carabiniers* A more relevant comparison, though, is with *À Bout de souffle* or *Bande à part*, and that sense of extra-cinematic metaphor is missing from the characterisations in those films and is central to the meaning of *Le Révolutionnaire*. Indeed, André Larsen sees this as a crucial part of the film's identity as a political work, writing that "[l]e spectateur est entraîné dans un univers où les références à la société québécoise sont nombreuses: à ce moment, le film n'existe que « par rapport » à un autre monde, et c'est dans cette relation subtile de la fiction et de la réalité que repose la quintessence de la contestation" (51) [the spectator is brought into a universe where references to Québec society are numerous: at this moment, the film exists only "in rapport" with another world, and it is in this subtle relationship between fiction and reality that the essence of contestation is located].

My assertion that Godard's early films are about very little outside of cinema itself is less true of a film like *Les Carabiniers*, whose (Lefebvrian?) caricatures of young soldiers and the trouble they cause has an obvious link to the war in Algeria and France's role in the worldwide process of de-colonisation. Ignoring for a moment the chronological problems that a comparison of *Les Carabiniers* with *Le Révolutionnaire* presents, this later Godard film seems to me to belong to a transitional period in Godard's career, *between* the Godard of *Bande à part* (1964) and *Tout va bien* (1972). Even if that doesn't quite work chronologically, it does make for a useful division in terms of Godard's formal and political concerns. Lefebvre seems to have a closer link to this second, more politically *engagé* period of Godard's career than the earlier period that directly precedes *Le Révolutionaire*. And it is it the relation, or rather the lack of relation, to this first period of Godard's, a relation that might at first seem self-evident in Lefebvre's early films, that I want to discuss first.

A gentle nihilism informs both *Le Révolutionnaire* and early Godard. Jean-Paul Belmondo in *À Bout de souffle* meets a death that seems not very meaningful; it is romantically nihilistic in exactly the same way that many Hollywood gangster films are. *Le Révolutionnaire* also ends with almost *everyone* dying an over-acted death; it might be hard not to see this as part of a Godardian sense of the absurd, and to read the opening dedication of the film "À ceux qui ne veulent pas mourir pour rien" [For those who don't want to die for nothing] as contributing to a sense of irony and detachment. But again, Godard's ironic sensibility here is essentially intra-cinematic. This intertextuality is, of course, not entirely bereft of social or political significance. It is not difficult to make the link between Godard's quotation of Hollywood films and those films' counter-cultural meanings, especially since their status as outlaw productions under Nazi occupation was a part of the tumultuous youth of most of the filmmakers of the French New Wave; such a link is a mainstay of the criticism and history of the *nouvelle vague*. But *Le Révolutionnaire*'s artificial nihilism has a very specific political meaning, one that is more explicitly linked to the tumultuous cultural climate of early-60s Québec than the political importance that can be divined from *À Bout de souffle*. Brûlé writes that the conclusion of the film, when The Leader, seemingly the last of his men to survive, is congratulated by the Union-Jack waving enemy troops and then killed by one of his own dying men, "cela signifie, si l'on prend un point de vue optimiste, qu'ils sont tous *morts pour rien*" (1971b:30, emphasis his) [this signifies, if one takes an optimistic point of view, that they have all *died for nothing*]. Brûlé adds in a footnote that the pessimistic view would be to believe that "leur [les rebelles] mort a profité à l'ennemi, autrement dit, sans le savoir, ils ont fait le jeu du gouvernement ennemi" (30n6) [their death benefited the enemy, or to put it another way, without knowing it, they played the game of the enemy government]. This odd view, that it's optimistic to assume that they all died for nothing and that they very well may have contributed to their own defeat, is reflective of a view of Québec separatism that is steeped not in the possibility of success but the inevitability of failure, a tradition embodied by the *Patriotes* of the early 19th century. "La rébellion de 1837-1838 est la preuve irréfutable que les Canadiens français sont capables de tout, même de fomenter leur propre défaite," Hubert Aquin wrote in his 1965 essay "L'art de la défaite" (113) [the 1837-1838 rebellion is the irrefutable proof that French Canadians are capable of anything, even of formenting their own defeat]. The death of *all* the troops by the end of the film reflects not just a satire of the violence of war films or even the romanticism of young revolutionaries, but a melancholy reflection of Aquin's sense of perpetual defeat: Québec could not peacefully, happily stay within Canada, but Québec could never really become independent either.

Overall, then, *Le Révolutionnaire* is about a sense of deep, absurd and inevitable failure. Brûlé writes of the film that:

> Somme toute *Le Révolutionnaire* raconte trois échecs :
> a) l'échec de la révolution puisque tout meurent avant même qu'il n'y ait eu action révolutionnaire. De plus, les troupiers ont fait le jeu du Gouvernement ennemi.
> b) l'échec du Canada c'est-à-dire l'histoire d'une série de conflits qui mènent à la formation d'un groupe à vocation révolutionnaire.
> c) échec du chef vis-à-vis de la Femme puisqu'elle seule survit. (1971b:35)
>
> [Overall, *Le Révolutionnaire* recounts three failures:
> a) The failure of the revolution since everyone dies before there is any revolutionary action. Moreover, the troops had played along with the enemy Government's game.
> b) The failure of Canada which is to say the story of a series of conflicts that lead to the formation of a group with revolutionary ends.
> c) The failure of the leader with regards to the Woman {a character in the film; we never find out her name}, since she's the only one who survives.]

These three failures could be thought of as the "big three" of socio-political transformations in the Quiet Revolution: the evolution in Québec of a more activist national consciousness (in the film embodied by revolutionaries, who have replaced the Priests of an older Catholic nationalism), a scepticism about Québec's place in Canada, and the rejection of traditional, Catholic-influenced ideas about gender. All of this is, for Lefebvre, a failure. Produced just as the Quiet Revolution was getting underway, *Le Révolutionnaire* is a sceptical, almost cynical intervention in a moment of tremendous idealism. It looks like some of Godard's films of the late 50s and early 60s, but its relationship to a rapidly evolving local politics is considerably closer than what was going on in the work of his French contemporary.

And the "look" of the film, or more exactly the stylistic choices that Lefebvre makes, represent a departure from what Godard was doing. *Le Révolutionnaire* does indeed have a wandering narrative and favours long takes and long shots, thus making it look a bit like the films of the early French New Wave. Barrowclough, though, argues that Lefebvre's aesthetic in this film has a much earlier root, writing that "[t]he black, match-like figures against the white landscape in *Le Révolutionnaire* have... [a] silent-movie feel to them. The comic-strip section in the film (an historical parody) scratched onto the film adding wigs, swords and feathers to the actors recalls Méliès" (20). Indeed, this sequence where natives clash with British troops and the history of Canada is explained in a highly artificial way (Lefebvre scratches right onto the film itself, similar to what NFB/ONF animation giant Norman McLaren was doing at the time) more *anticipates* the artificiality of counter-cinema than reflects what was actually going on in France at the time. Lefebvre is offering very little in the way of an invitation to "get lost" in his narrative, as would be expected from a classical Hollywood film and which Godard does in varying amounts (through lingering on the romance in *À Bout de souffle*, for example). Instead, through both his absurdist narrative and his formal choices (exceptionally long takes, lingering landscape shots, wandering camera, and occasional avant garde flourish), he is always trying to draw his viewer outside of the text itself. He still invites that viewer to be seriously involved with the narrative; it's not all about irony and distance. But a certain separation between the viewer and the film itself, a certain forced awareness that the film is merely a creation, is a central part of *Le Révolutionnaire*.

So I would argue that starting as early as *Le Révolutionnaire*, there is a close kinship between a lot of Lefebvre's work and what would eventually come to be known as counter-cinema, an arm of the European avant garde with which Godard, by the 1970s, would become almost synonymous. Lefebvre's film *Jusqu'au cœur* marks the beginning of his full involvement with this practice. Barrowclough asserts that the film "employs on a formal level the same violence it aims to denounce: the rapid juxtaposition of sound and image is intended to imitate the agressivity of television advertising" (20). This is not exactly a ringing endorsement, but it is an assessment that captures how formally uncompromising the film is. The violence that Lefebvre is rebelling against is obviously related in part to the Vietnam War; the film's protagonist Garou makes regular reference to the War, images of bombing and the sounds of explosions recur throughout, and the jets at the end have American flags on them. While I do not wish to draw a direct connection between this film and Godard's contribution to the 1967 *Loin du Vietnam* (produced under the auspices of the collective Dziga Vertov group, of which Godard was a key member), there is a sense that both of these filmmakers are drawing upon highly disorienting, distancing strategies in order to evoke the terrible violence that filled the screens of American, and, to a certain extent, European and Canadian, television screens. We will see just this kind of strategy used to evoke the over-represented or un-representable violence in Chapter three, when Pat Murphy and Michel Brault make films about violent uprisings.

Such strategies are, as I discuss in that chapter, closely related to a Brechtian idea of art, given how it tries to balance the demands of popular narrative with an attempt to get the viewer to critically engage with the aesthetic mechanics of the work itself and so also with the politics of the society in which the work was produced. In a way, *Jusqu'au cœur* is one of Lefebvre's most Brechtian films, in that it adamantly insists on the separation of the viewer from the world of the film and does so in pursuit of a political project (agitation against the war in Vietnam and the culture of capitalist imperialism that lead to that war).

But in another way, the film is not Brechtian at all, since its form is so far from the conventions of popular art as to be extremely difficult to make sense of; there is the inescapable scent of élitist art about the work. Much the same has been said of Godard's "Brechtian" films (such as *Tout va bien*), although a crucial point of contrast is in the relative stridency of the politics espoused. Godard's most Brechtian period roughly corresponds with his interest in Maoism and other militant variations of leftist politics. Such a position is not discernible from *Jusqu'au cœur*, or from any of Lefebvre's other "Brechtian" films (such as 1974's *Ultimatum*). The ideology of these films is more moderate-left, focussing on the American involvement in both Vietnam and Canada/Québec but visualising this involvement not only through the rigorous political and economic analysis that we see in some of Godard's work of the period (like *Lettre à Jane* [1972]), but through an illustration of the psychological and inter-personal effects of this involvement, through evocation of the way that it affected people's everyday lives. Brecht's theatrical practice was supposed to be a *popular* one: hence his reliance, however self-conscious, on the forms of conventional theatre. Lefebvre is effecting something of a reversal here, relying on a political point of view that was fairly accessible, even if parts of the film draw upon a form that is a bit more off-the-wall than what would be found in any of Brecht's plays. This kind of manipulation of Brechtian form, which illustrates an interest in its aspirations but a reluctance to follow along the path of some of its more rigorous adherents in Britain and Europe, is common to Québec and Ireland, as can be seen in Pat Murphy's *Maeve*, Michel Brault's *Les Ordres*, or Bob Quinn's *Caoineadh Airt Ui Laoire* (1975).

Brûlé's argument that *Jusqu'au cœur* is really two films, which he calls Film A and Film B, is especially relevant to the way that these strategies will be used by filmmakers from Ireland and Québec, and it is also indicative of a key difference between Lefebvre and Godard. Brûlé describes the opening scenes of Film A, which feature men barging into Garou's apartment, breaking furniture and roughing him up, as "parlé ou dit," spoken or said. Brûlé also compares the film to a *policier*. Film B, he writes, is more classical and less subjective. Comparing the two films, he writes that "on voit tantôt (A) Garou, dernier homme dans un monde unidimensionnalisé, dernier homme devenu forcément un fuyard; tantôt (B) Garou en train de subir un « lavage de cerveau » dont l'objectif est de lui inculquer le sens de la guerre" (1971b:52) [one either sees (A) Garou, last man in a unidimensional world, last man who necessarily became a runaway; or (B) Garou as he suffers a "brainwashing," whose objective is to inculcate him into the mind set of war]. These two films, though, come together as a portrait of a dystopia, drawing upon very different cinematic styles. Indeed, to call "Film B," or the brainwashing / hallucinatory scenes, more classical, seems to me something of a stretch. They are shot in a semi-illusionist way, eschewing the essayistic voice-over that organises "Film A," but they are also highly artificial, sometimes shot with a disorientingly intense colour schema with absurd situations (such as a bustier-clad woman administering various drugs to Garou); they are also shot on a sound stage, a fact of production which is made obvious by the apparent artificiality of the setting. On the other hand, the scenes in the semi-essayistic, more subjective-seeming sequences ("Film A"), are shot on location, in actual apartments and on the streets of Montréal.

The different films, then, or more exactly different approaches to film making, are in essence leaking into one another. Both Lefebvre and Godard, towards the end of their careers, turned to the production of intensely personal, multi-part videos that eschewed narrative entirely (Godard with his *Histoires du cinéma* series [in progress since 1993], and Lefebvre with his *L'âge des images* series [1995][4]). Both filmmakers also previewed this move with earlier films that sought to oppose narrative transparency. Godard's move in this direction became known as counter-cinema, and with good reason; his most fully realised films of this period are rigidly opposed to representational modes. This term never really caught on in Québec film circles, despite the appearance of films like Lefebvre's, along with films like Anne-Claire Poirier's *Mourir à tue-tête* (1979) which similarly disrupted narrative illusionism and transparency. Part of the reason for this is because of just the kind of leakage, just the kind of duality that Brûlé is identifying. Lefebvre has never entirely rejected strategies which allow for involvement and identification, even when he seems to be leaving them behind. So what we see in some of the Godardian films of Lefebvre, and *Le Révolutionnaire* and *Jusqu'au cœur* make for nice embodiments of two different "versions" of Godard, is a more moderate, open-to-compromise version of what was going on in France. Some of Lefebvre's films (certainly not all of them) can be fruitfully linked with Godard, but it is essential to understand this linkage as a complex and sometimes contradictory one. These are assessments that could also be made of both Irish and Québec cinema's relationship with the overall idea of an avant-garde.

Conclusion

Part of the reason for this lack of a proper avant garde or a full-on political cinema in both Ireland and Québec leads us, finally, to the issues that we discussed at the beginning of the chapter; Lefbvre has long been closer to filmmakers like Rocha than to Godard. His films are explicitly political, which is not a surprise. The tendency to deal with politics and history is common in "minor cinemas," which often emerge from countries which are living through ongoing periods of political and social transformation, such as Ireland or Québec. But his films must also aim for a wider audience than can be generally relied upon in works of counter-cinema or Third Cinema. This is partially an economic matter, and while countries like France or the United States have the infrastructure that can support an unambiguously avant garde cinema, this is not generally true of "small nations," like Ireland or Québec.

As we can see through his activities as a producer at the NFB/ONF and with his company Cinak, Lefebvre was once quite interested in the complexities of building a national, if "minor," cinematic infrastructure. His activities outside of film making itself spoke to the difficulties and ambiguities faced by filmmakers in countries like Brazil, Portugal, Québec or Ireland, places that have limited cinematic infrastructure and a marginalised local image culture. Lefebvre's work in this area points to the not-often-acknowledged fact that the cinemas of Brazil, Portugal, Québec and Ireland have a great deal in common. His work in the pastoral mode has been a similarly conflicted, and revisionist treatment of a visual form that has been very important in Québec culture, and has also been crucial to

Irish visual culture, raising important questions about national identity, modernity and the politics of form. The way Lefebvre has taken up the politics of form in his more avant garde work is also relevant to the way that cinema has evolved in Ireland and Québec; Lefebvre, like so many filmmakers in both these countries (including Michel Brault, Pat Murphy, Jacques Godbout and John T. Davis), has been restless with classical narrative forms at the same time that he has been unwilling to abandon them altogether. While they are important and worthy of much detailed discussion for reasons that are utterly unrelated to what I have been dealing with in this chapter, the films of Jean-Pierre Lefebvre offer a most fruitful way into the "minor cinemas" of the world. Both his aesthetic and politics are deeply conflicted; like filmmakers in so many "small nations," he comes from a socio-cultural space that does not allow for simplicity.

Notes:

1. This argument is closely mapped out in James Roy MacBean's article "Godard and Rocha at the Crossorads," in Nichols, ed., vol. 1, pp. 91-110. In this essay, MacBean uses the images of Rocha standing at a crossroads in Godard's *Vent d'est* (1969) as a jumping off point to discuss the results of their meeting one another and the ways that Third Cinema and Godard have influenced one another.

2. Paul Schrader's1972 book *Transcendental Style in Film* focussed on Carl Dreyer,Yasujiro Ozu and, yes, Robert Bresson, seeking to explain the way that spiritual, and specifically transcendental, concerns can be conveyed by formal and not simply narrative means.

3. Avant garde flourishes dealing with time were common to the North American independent cinema of the 1970s; Michael Snow's 45 minutes zooms are an obvious example, but Jon Jost's integration of a long take of a watch clicking off sixty seconds in his otherwise narrative *Angel City* (1976) is another attempt to make the audience aware of the cultural meaning of time and how fast it passes, one that is perhaps closer to the sprit of Lefebvre's work. Jost and Snow, however, seemed to be using these disorienting, stultifying effects to convey a sense of alienation and distance from the image itself, while Lefbevre clearly has a more lyrical idea in mind.

4. It should be noted that one of the installments of *L'Age des images*, *Passion de l'innocence*, is essentially a (very meandering) narrative. The other installments of the series are quite non-narrative, subjective essay videos. Peter Harcourt has analysed these films in considerable detail in his book *Jean-Pierre Lefebvre: Vidéaste* (Toronto/Waterloo: Toronto International Film Festival / Wilfred Laurier Press, 2001).

Chapter Two:
Bob Quinn, Pierre Perrault, and Arguments with Ethnography

The last two decades have seen the complete transformation of ethnographic film making. Once the safe vocation of earnest scientists seeking imagery of exotic cultures that they could take home and study with their colleagues, it has become a fertile ground for revision by third world and avant garde filmmakers. This transformation has been the subject of a great deal of recent scholarly work, such as Fatima Toby-Roning's *The Third Eye*, Laura U. Marks' *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses* or Catherine Russell's *Experimental Ethnography*, and many articles in the pages of journals like *Visual Anthropology Review*. This kind of transformation, I would argue, was previewed in part by the work of Bob Quinn and Pierre Perrault.

In American and European film studies, Jean Rouch is often the only filmmaker whose films are discussed in any detail when explaining movements to revise ethnographic film. Rouch, a French ethnologist who also made films such as *Jaguar* (1967), *Les Maîtres fous* (1955) and *Chronique d'un été* (1960), did enormous amounts to complicate the relation between the ethnographer and the subject studied in ethnographic practice. His films also contributed to a wider re-evaluation of documentary form: he is credited with coining the term "cinéma vérité" and he made films that centralise his own subjectivity and locate themselves *between* re-enactment and documentary. While Rouch is indeed tremendously important (and influential on both Quinn and Perrault) the tendency of film scholars not to look much beyond his work has led to a somewhat monolithic understanding of challenges to ethnographic orthodoxy. This tendency to focus on the anti-colonialist Rouch, whose films could be seen as part of a struggle for the liberation of peoples outside of France, also allows scholars to sidestep the politically ambiguous ways that this ethnographic revisionism has often been used for essentially nationalist ends, which is what we see in work by Quinn and Perrault. They have both made films in semi-collaborative ways, with other professional filmmakers and with the communities they were filming, in a way that was similar to, but much more moderate than, the push for a collaborative mode of production that marked the rhetoric of Third Cinema. The politics of their films also echo without fully subscribing to the radical political project of this movement. In addition to revising the local ethnographic traditions (which I will of course discuss), Quinn and Perrault are also engaged in complex arguments with Robert Flaherty, the famed American documentarian who made *Nanook of the North* (1922) and *Man of Aran* (1934), whose films seem to haunt them both.

Quinn and Perrault find the heart of their national experiences in locations that are on the fringes of the nation-state as such; both focus on island communities, and both find even their own national borders to be too constricting for their project. Furthermore, Perrault and Quinn linger on non-urban ways of life, languages that are likely incomprehensible to the inhabitants of the urban centre, and the economically underdeveloped aspects of these cultures. Both filmmakers, then, are closely linked to nationalist movements, but both of them are also engaging in radical revisions of that project, showing such discourse to be far more complex and contradictory than they might on the surface appear. For these issues, Perrault's Île-aux-Coudres trilogy (1963-67), and especially *Pour la* *suite du monde* (1963, co-directed with Michel Brault[1]) and Quinn's films *Poitín* (1977) and *The Bishop's Story* (1993) are especially interesting. Moreover, both Quinn and Perrault continued this project of nationalist revision by examining their project's global implications. Perrault, in his films *Le Règne du jour* (1966) and *Un pays sans bon sens!* (1970), is examining the same kind of internationalism that pre-occupies Quinn in his *Atlantean* films (1983 & 1997); there are similar points of contact between their works on diaspora, such as *L'Acadie, L'Acadie?!?* (1971) and *Pobol í London: Flytippers* (1987). Quinn and Perrault are, across a body of work that is very diverse indeed, putting forward a form of nationalism that resists some of the basics of that project, and they are also arguing for a form of globalisation that denies the homogenisation that so many fear is that project's logical conclusion.

While Perrault and Quinn are not are as radically experimental as the filmmakers discussed by Marks, Russell or Tobing-Rony, they share the ideological and political concerns outlined in their work, without the alienating elitism that sometimes characterises the avant garde. Rather than actively resisting or rejecting, Perrault and Quinn are seeking to embody the idealism that, while seldom visible, has always been contained within their chosen form (documentary), political projects (nationalism and advocacy for marginal areas), and profession (ethnographer). After explaining the ways that they deal with both foreign (i.e. Flaherty) traditions of ethnography and traditions that are closer to their respective homes, I'll show how they draw upon the experience of islanders to both illustrate an idea of national self and show how that idea is complex, unstable, despite the "purity" that is often associated with island life. They further undermine that purity by examining the way that a national idea has been formed by extra-territorial situations, such as migration and diaspora. And they have carried forth this interest in mixture and migration, transplanting their concerns about nation and self onto other forms, as we see in their book projects. Their work, then, is restless and critical.

Some notes on the historical disjuncture between Quinn and Perrault, and how that relates to their link with Jean Rouch, are in order. Perrault's films are roughly contemporary with Rouch's, and it shows. The Québécois filmmaker seems to share with his French colleague an interest in breaking down barriers between subject and object, and also enunciates a radical political project that is inseparably linked to the process of ethnography itself. Like Rouch's films such as *Les Maîtres fous* (1955) or *Jaguar* (1967), Perrault's ethnographic documents were realised through the close involvement of the participants and rendered in a semi-fictional style. Rouch sought to put people in semi-fictional situations that echo their own lives, situations that not only document a culture but illuminate the interior lives of the people who make up a culture.

Rouch also seems to have had some influence, however indirect, on Quinn. Indeed, despite any historical disjuncture, Perrault's and Quinn's practice is closer to Rouch's than to the more aggressively experimental ethnography of the 1970s-90s, which includes the widely discussed work of Trinh T. Minh-ha. Indeed, it is these kinds of formal experiments that are roughly contemporary to Quinn's work (and less so to Perrault's), and they seem to have had little visible impact on him, despite the discernable effect they have had on experimental ethnography of the last two and half decades. Quinn's work is more fruitfully linked to what David MacDougall has called "ethnobiography." MacDougall takes the term from Argentine filmmaker Jorge Preloran, whose *Imaginero* (1969) seems to him a good example of the genre. Of its methods, he writes that:

> Ethnobiography, whatever its aims as advocacy, attempts to create portraits of individuals of other cultures in some psychological and historical depth. While it is ostensibly a way of writing culture from the inside through an insider's perspective, it is framed by an outsider's concerns. In its doubling of subjectivities and its attempt to reconstitute the culturally different historical person it creates a conundrum, the charged space of an encounter.
> (241)

This is also close to what Rouch was doing, although it represents something of a departure from the Frenchman's emphasis on societal structure. MacDougall invokes films such as Hubert Smith's *The Spirit Possession of Alejandro Mamani* (1975), John Marshall's *N!ai: The Story of a !Kung Woman* (1980) and Peter Loïzos' *Sophia's People* (1985) as examples of the genre, being "ethnographic films that concern the consciousness of individual social actors" (242). Much the same could be said of Jim Mulkerns' Irish-language film *An tOileánach a d'Fhill* (1970), about a man returning to his island home after working in construction in England. That work is in Irish (and, like many films in Irish, has never been subtitled) and has both fictional and ethnographic aspirations (its re-creations of the fishing that he returns to are highly detailed). It could be thought of as a piece of ethnobiography, and it looks very much like a Bob Quinn film. Indeed, with Quinn's work, as with a number of more clearly ethnographic films of the same period, we begin to see a drift away from macro-analysis towards something more intimate.

To be certain, there is a considerable historical difference between Quinn and Perrault; the former is making films in an essentially post-Rouchian era, the latter is making films contemporary to Rouch's. But while Quinn can certainly be seen as part of a shift towards subjective or impressionistic forms that is part of ethnographic film making of the 1970s (and which Perrault's films, for the most part, precede), there is a sense throughout his films that he coming from a formal and ideological place that is very close indeed to Perrault's, and to Rouch's. This is not, I would argue, too terribly much of a stretch; far from being a rejection of the Rouchian model, this ethno-biographical movement of the 1970s and 80s is an extension of Rouch's belief in breaking down barriers between documenter and documented, between fiction and science.

I. Local Ethnographic Legacies

While Québec and Ireland have very different overall relationships with the colonising project, in both places the pursuit of ethnography has been closely linked with that project. I want very briefly, then, to sketch out the *local* ethnographic traditions that Perrault and Quinn are responding to, in addition to their response to the essentially *foreign* influence of Flaherty. These traditions still exert a considerable hold over the popular imaginations of their respective nations. I do not wish to argue that this kind of ethnography is unambiguously wrong-headed, nor will I argue that Quinn and Perrault are dealing with it in a reactionary way, throwing out the curious and adventurous baby with the romantic and reductive ethnographic bathwater. Instead, I'd like to hint at some of the possibilities that this early ethnography presented, and show the ways that these filmmakers learned from these examples, only to enter into complicated arguments with their legacies.

As I mentioned in the introduction, the French unit of the NFB/ONF, of which Perrault was a part, was one of the most important cultural wings of the Quiet Revolution. But as I also discussed in the introduction, the filmmakers of the French unit were not exactly starting from scratch. The films of Fr. Albert Tessier and Fr. Maurice Proulx, both of whom travelled throughout Québec's rural regions making government-sponsored 16mm films for non-commercial exhibition, are obvious antecedents to the NFB/ONF work of this period. Proulx's films in particular carry some very heavy ideological baggage that Perrault is consciously seeking to reject. Summing up the legacy of Proulx and Tessier, David Clandfield writes that "they might best be characterised as a '*cinéma de la fidélité*,' committed to the preservation of the traditional rural way of life, based on the two intertwined institutions of the Catholic church and a conservative government" (1984a:114). Pierre Véronneau writes of Proulx that "Même s'il fait ses débuts sous Godbout... on identifie davantage son œuvre au gouvernement Duplessis et à l'idéologie de conservation que véhiculent les élites traditionnelles associées au duplessisme" (1991:454) [even though he made his debut under Godbout {a relatively liberal premier of Québec who served from 1939-1942}... one identifies his *œuvre* with the Duplessis government and with the ideology of conservation conveyed by the traditional élites associated with Duplessisism].

Proulx's most famous films deal with the kind of remote communities that so interested Perrault, although there is a considerable gap between the ideology that informs these two filmmakers' works. Proulx's most famous film, *En pays neuf* (1937), deals with the Abitibi region (a region about which Perrault completed a cycle of four films from 1975-80, several of which integrate footage shot by Proulx), and his film *Les Îles de la Madeleine* (1956) covered a lot of the same ground as Perrault's Île-aux-Coudres trilogy. But throughout his career, Perrault is trying to make sense of what these remote lifestyles might mean in a modernising Québec, struggling to come to grips with what it means to be a nation that can meaningfully include such places. Proulx's films, on the other hand, internalise a deep nostalgia for a way of life that, even in the late thirties when he started to make films, was already disappearing (and which was enjoying its last twilight in 1956, when he made his Magdalen island film). *En pays neuf* (1936), commissioned by the Ministère de la Colonisation et la Culture, focusses on the settling of a wild land, and the small communities that were slowly built there; its cinematography is self-consciously picturesque throughout (and is indeed quite stunningly photographed in places), and a conspicuous voice-of-God narrator who sings the praises of the rugged settlers (and the devoted priests who watch over them). The Perrault aesthetic breaks completely from this essentially classical/realist form: Perrault almost never uses voice-overs, he extensively uses handheld camera work, his films openly acknowledge the presence of the filmmakers, and the overall form of his work is poetic rather than realist. And as we will see, Perrault has a very ambiguous, sometimes almost pained relationship to the kind of nationalism that traditional ethnography supports; Proulx's work, no doubt due in part to its status as a government-commissioned information film, is missing this sense of internal ideological tension or struggle.

Ireland, like Québec, has a significant tradition of inwardly-directed ethnography by which Bob Quinn is informed, although the exact nature of that ethnography is slightly different from what we see in Québec. Lawrence J. Taylor sums up the relevant discourse by noting that:

> The anthropology of Ireland did not begin as part of a comparative anthropology of Europe, and certainly not as a quest for the representative or average Irish district or community, but rather as a late Victorian search for primitive survivals on the western edge of the island... If this Protestant and imperial view of the Celtic fringe sought the primitive Other, however, an equally Victorian (and often Protestant) sympathetic Gaelic Revival movement sought the same characters but as folklore heroes, for the Revivalists were in search of self-definition – the true Celtic Other within. Where to look? The answer lay in an analogy dictated by symbolic logic (in both senses of the term): as Ireland is to England, so are the islands of its western shore to Ireland. The Gaelic ur-ground was to be sought on such outposts as the Arans, west of Galway, or the Blaskets, off the southwest Kerry coast.
> (216)

Although this tradition of ethnography is more literary than the cinematic traditions of Frs. Tessier or Proulx in Québec, it is clear that it has had a significant impact on Quinn's work. This essentially antiquarian idea of ethnography, although it was useful to nationalists of various stripes, was also much less closely tied to the state apparatuses than the work of Québec filmmakers like Fr. Proulx. Instead, it sought to use the idea of a lost Celtic civilisation as a poetic starting point, seeing Irish speakers and Irish speaking regions as the repository of a kind of national unconscious that was pure and uncorrupted by either English language or culture or industrial modernity. But by the time of the Celtic Twilight, the early 20th century, the Gaeltachts had already been decimated by centuries of economic underdevelopment, and were struggling, usually with tragically unsuccessful results. The passionate collectors of Gaelic folklore and culture, however, were generally uninterested in these kinds of practical difficulties. Proulx's films are not exactly modernity-minded tools of liberation, but they do acknowledge that their subjects are effected by economic, cultural and governmental forces. The poetry of W.B. Yeats, or the cultural activities of the turn-of-the-century Gaelic League, while they did much to bring attention to a dying language, created a vision of the lives of Irish speakers that made them seem somehow above such concerns. Much of Bob Quinn's work is devoted to revising that vision.

Quinn is also reacting against a semi-local ethnographic tradition that has no real equivalent in Québec, the Gaeltacht memoir. The best known of these memoirs deal with the Blasket Islands, have long been on school syllabi, and are widely translated into a number of languages. Works such as Muiris Ó Súilleabháin's *Fiche Blian ag Fás*, Peig Sayers' *Peig* and, most famously, Tomás Ó Criomhthain's *An tOileánach*, presented view of island life that was in many cases just as simplistic as that produced by outsiders. Indeed, it is generally agreed that these books have been so successful precisely because they confirmed metropolitan stereotypes about romantic purity, pre-modernity and simplicity (Ó

Criomhthain's work is generally cited as the more literary and formally interesting exception). Just as he is rebelling against a semi-mystic, Dublin-produced vision of Gaeltacht life, Quinn's work is quite closely informed by a scepticism towards these rugged, nostalgic visions of a Gaeltacht that was forever innocent but also forever old.

II. The Ghost of Flaherty

Does it matter that the protagonists of Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* didn't live the way they do in that famous documentary film? Is it important that the man at the centre of his *Man of Aran*, a film regularly heralded as a documentary classic, is not an islandman at all, but the English actor Tiger King? Questions like these continue to plague the history of documentary film. Quinn and Perrault are important in no small part because of the innovative answers that they propose. In essence, they have gone Flaherty one better, making work that is just as manipulated and artificial as the semi-fictional cinema of their American godfather. At the same time, though, they have made that very artificiality a central part of their films; there is no faked naturalism like *Nanook*'s in either Quinn's or Perrault's films.

The link between Flaherty and Quinn would seem to be more explicit than that between Flaherty and Perrault, given that they have both made work about Ireland's island regions. But in Ireland, *Man of Aran* is the subject of some very mixed feelings, as contemporary ideas about remote areas move away from the romantic visions for which Flaherty was famous towards a more realist vision of the islands, one that takes into account the ambiguous version of modernity that exists there. Lance Pettitt has noted that "[t]he Irish premiere of *Man of Aran* was greeted by Irish government approval since it was seen to endorse the dominant ideology of self-reliance and ascetic frugality of 1930s Ireland" (80). This was hardly the reception that awaited Quinn's first feature-length film, the Connemara-set *Poitín*[2], which, when it was aired on St. Patrick's Day in 1979, was greeted by calls for it to be banned or destroyed (McIlroy 1988:68). Quinn's vision of island life is defined by frustrated inhabitants with little to do but wait in line for the dole, traffic in illegal liquor and violently express feelings of pent-up anger; this was a long way from Flaherty's rugged but lovely Inishmór. This was also a significant departure in terms of the representation of Gaeltacht life in general, and seemed to be specifically calculated to respond to Flaherty's imagination of the place, which still held enormous sway in the Irish popular consciousness. Writing in the *Sunday Independent*, Ciaran Carty drew an explicit comparison between *Poitín* and *Man of Aran,* asserting that Quinn "implicitly de-romanticises the Robert Flaherty images of the rugged West as a place of primal dignity where man does noble battle with the elements and frail currachs brave the relentless Atlantic surf while women stoically tend the stew-pots at turf fires" (cited in Rockett 1988:129). Flaherty's debt to American Romanticism and its associated ideas about man and nature is well known and widely discussed (see, for example, Richard Barsam's *Nonfiction Film*), but Quinn is coming from a very different socio-cultural space, that of the linguistic-rights movement that emerged from the Gaeltacht areas in the late 1960s, known as Cearta Sibhialta na

Gaeltachta. Nuala C. Johnson writes that in this movement, "[i]n common with civil rights movements in North America and Europe, the terms of the public debate in part shifted away from narrow debates about nationhood to broader questions related to equal opportunity and civil liberties" (185).

But even though Quinn's approach could be said to be more realist and politically conscious than Flaherty's, *Poitín* is a fiction film, whereas *Man of Aran* is, or has at least often been treated as, a documentary. *Poitín*, however, draws upon many conventions of documentary: it's shot on grainy 16mm using mostly non-professional actors, and its emphasis is on the details of everyday life. *Man of Aran*, conversely, is heavily dependent on fictional techniques, using non-synch sound and being comprised mostly of sequences that are obviously re-enacted and often edited according to classical Hollywood film grammar. William Rothman claims that "Flaherty's pioneering work marks a moment before the distinction between fiction and documentary was set, before the term 'documentary film' was coined" (1), and this is a moment whose possibilities and sense of discovery Bob Quinn was clearly trying to recapture.

Pierre Perrault, like many Québec filmmakers of the 1960s, was also seeking out a cinematic practice where fiction and non-fiction interact. *Pour la suite du monde* (1963) is the film that is the most clearly indebted to Flaherty, although all of Perrault's work arguably carries some of his influence. *Nanook of the North* and *Man of Aran* have both been strongly criticised for featuring images of hunting and fishing techniques that are no longer actually in use (the participants in both films required extensive instruction from Flaherty); *Pour la* *suite du monde* also has as its central subject an archaic method of porpoise hunting that is no longer practised on Île-aux-Coudres. However, Perrault is highly self-conscious about this fact. The film opens with text that tells how the filmmakers (Perrault collaborated with Michel Brault and Bernard Gosselin) went to Île-aux-Coudres and had to convince the inhabitants to revive the hunt, and the first reel or so consists of shots of people arguing, at meetings and in small groups, about whether that's a good idea. Perrault is often associated with the rise of *cinéma direct* and *cinéma vérité*, an entirely reasonable assessment given his use of lightweight camera gear and his tendency to eschew voice-overs. But Perrault was also comfortable with a certain level of artifice, of manipulation; where the *vérité* comes in is when he makes it absolutely clear (speaking to his viewer quite *direct*-ly, one might say) that he has in some ways manipulated the situation. Explaining the push and pull between active collaboration on the part of the inhabitants of Île-aux-Coudres and neutral documentation of their activities, Gilles Marsolis writes that:

> Dans le film de Flaherty, Nanouk joue sa situation, il ne tient pas à nous faire croire le contraire, et la complicité établie entre lui et Flaherty se communique au spectateur; dans *Pour la suite du monde*, les gens ne jouent pas, ils *sont*, mais ce type de complicité triangulaire n'en existe pas moins... Même si le cameraman se fait discret et s'intègre à l'action, les gens sont conscients du fait que la caméra est témoin de tout ce qu'ils font ou de tout ce qu'ils disent. Ils ne sont pas dupes, ni trahis.
> (107, emphasis his)
>
> [In the Flaherty film, Nanook acts out the situation, he doesn't try to make us believe the opposite, and the complicity established between him and Flaherty is communicated to the spectator; in *Pour la suite du monde*, the people aren't playing, they *are*, but this type of triangular complicity is no less real... Even if the cameraman makes himself discreet and integrates himself into the action, the people are aware of the fact that the camera is

> witnessing everything they do or everything they say. They are not dupes, nor are they betrayed.]

The complexity of this formulation (made no simpler by my chunky translation) gives a good sense of the multi-layered, sometimes conflicted way that Perrault is interacting with both the subjects of his documentary and with documentary history itself.

Perrault shares with Quinn, however, a need to revise the belief that life in remote areas was a kind of perfect, pre-modern paradise, a misconception that is less directly influenced by Flaherty in Québec than in Ireland. Some influence is certainly present, though (no doubt partially because *Nanook of the North* was filmed in Ungava, a region of Northern Québec), and Perrault and Flaherty share a romantic impulse, although Perrault allows his romanticism to be tempered by the material reality of his subjects and the perspective of his participants, who are never transformed into actors in quite the same way that they are chez Flaherty. Phillipe Pilard would agree with this, I think; he writes that:

> Un *Homme d'Aran* version Perrault... aurait montré une *vraie* famille, un *vrai* pêcheur, décrit la communauté, intégré les recherches, les contes, les récits, l'histoire. Flaherty, lui, veut plier le réel aux dimensions de son rêve.
> (156, emphases mine)
>
> [A Perrault version of *Man of Aran*... would have showed an *actual* family, an *actual* fisherman, described the community, integrated research, folktales, stories, and history. Flaherty, as for him, wants to bend reality to the dimensions of his dream.]

Perrault's project in his Île-aux-Coudres trilogy is certainly the evocation of a non-urban, non-modern way of life, but he is much less of a storyteller, much less of a legend-weaver, than Flaherty. Perrault's Île-aux-Coudres has trucks, television, and even trips to New York and France. Moreover, in the trilogy's third installment, *Les voitures d'eau* (1969), the economic problems of the island, especially with regard to the control of maritime commerce, are discussed in some detail. This difference is most pronounced in the way the two filmmakers dealt with the Acadians. Flaherty's *Louisiana Story* (1948) is a semi-fictional portrait of the rough, dignified and utterly anti-modern life in the Louisiana swamp; Perrault's *L'Acadie, L'Acadie?!?* (1971) is about the sometimes militant struggle for linguistic rights by students at the Université de Moncton in New Brunswick. Perrault and Flaherty have very similar interests indeed, but only the American was willing to bend reality. Perrault just nudged it along a bit.

Both Quinn and Perrault are following what George E. Marcus describes as the modernist trend in recent anthropological writing and film making. Calling attention to ethnography's recent turn away from ideals of scientific objectivity and towards both narrative and montage, he writes that:

> This shift towards constructing the real through narrative rather than through classification is stimulated, I believe, not by some aesthetic preference but rather by a shift in the historic conditions in terms of which anthropology must identify itself and is practicable at all. The shift affects the way anthropology constructs its object (certainly no longer the primitive outside a modern world system) and how it argues for the authority of its own representations of otherness in a much more complex field of such representations. It is a field occupied by diverse others who aggressively and eloquently "speak for themselves" in the same media and to the same publics within which anthropologists once felt themselves to occupy a secure position.
> (36)

Bob Quinn, who has always made both fiction and documentary films about essentially the same subject, is very much a child of this transformation. Cultural anthropology and ethnography in Ireland had previously been a project wherein an English-speaking élite sought inspiration and national mythology from the country's island fringes; the flow of culture was always from the islands to the centre. Quinn, a transplanted Dubliner who has lived in Connemara for almost thirty years, has a very good sense of how unworkable the traditional model of Irish ethnography now is. He is looking for a flexible *modus operandi* that baulks neither at the mixture of fiction and documentary, at the mixture of actors and locals more or less playing themselves (there are very few professional actors in any of Quinn's films; he mostly uses people who live nearby) nor the mixture of his own impact as an author and the impact of the people whom he is filming. Perrault's films, especially his Île-aux-Coudres trilogy but also *Un pays sans bon sens* and *L'Acadie, L'Acadie?!?*, adapt a similarly modernist skepticism towards conventions. As we shall see, Perrault's cinema is one in which the influences of the author and the subjects are equally felt, where the subjects speak freely about their lives (as in Quinn's films, in a language and about subjects which most urbanites would likely find foreign), and where documentary and poetic objectives co-exist. These films work within conventions such as narrative and ethnography at the same time that they reconstruct these forms, calling into question the legitimacy of their boundaries without fully stepping outside them.

III. Islands

Perrault's Île-aux-Coudres trilogy and Quinn's fiction films about Connemara and her neighbouring islands, while having many obvious differences, provide an excellent starting place for an examination of the ways that these two filmmakers are revising, but not entirely abandoning, the ethnographic traditions I have just discussed in their pursuit of a similarly revised nationalist understanding of their respective cultures. Perrault and Quinn have ended up finding similar problems at the heart of island life, including battles between tradition and modernity and the necessity to revise documentary and narrative form in a way that is consistent with their project. Indeed, both of these filmmakers are evoking the essence of their cultures through formal strategies and images of lifestyles that viewers in the metropolitan centre would likely regard as essentially foreign. For Perrault and Quinn, as we see in films such as Quinn's *Poitín* and *The Bishop's Story*, and Perrault's *Pour la suite du monde*, nationalism is a compelling but contradictory project.

One of the most surprising aspects of Bob Quinn's films about Connemara and her surrounding islands is the way that they deal with the region's integration into the problems of contemporary Ireland. *The Bishop's Story*, Quinn's most recent narrative film (and, he has claimed, his final narrative film), provides a good starting place. Telling the story of a priest on Clare Island who falls in love with a young woman (Donal McCann and Maggie Fegan, respectively), the film centralises a non-urban, de-anglicised Ireland at the same time that it refuses to romanticise this way of life, or be coy about the reality of the Irish language's status in Ireland as a whole. This anti-romantic viewpoint is made evident from the very beginning of the film: it opens in a home for alcoholic priests, where a cynical, tired old bishop who has long since lost anything even close to religious faith is gently lecturing a younger man who is there because he molested altar boys. When they are in the home they speak in English, but when the film shifts to the island (this is a series of flashbacks, although they account for most of the film), the dialogue is completely in Irish (translated not by subtitles but by silent-movie-style intertitles). When the priest (now much younger) and the woman are re-united on the island (there are some home-movie style shots that suggest they had a close relationship when he was working in London), one of the first things he does is look at her arm and see the needle-tracks of a heroin addict (on her way to the island, she had tried to jump off the ferry and drown herself). A viewer might come to a film about the Gaeltacht expecting to see small, beat-up ferries and bearded, sweater-wearing islandmen, and they are present here. One of those bearded islandmen, though, confides to the priest that he's almost relieved that his new child was stillborn, so utterly without opportunities or future for young people is this island. These three figures, then, the suicidal heroin addict, the spiritually and economically depressed islandman (who had jumped off of his boat into the water to save her at the beginning of the film), and the serious, devout but also sexual priest, are all cues that the film will ride a very fine line between advocating for and exploding the mainstream understanding of island life in the late 20th century.

Indeed, *The Bishop's Story* is full of images that draw attention to anachronistic elements of life on this small island, although there is a palatable tension in the way that this imagery is conveyed. One of the very important scenes is a race in boats, which are a little longer than standard rowboats and which accommodate three oarsmen (the architecture of boats is, as we shall see, of great interest to Bob Quinn). There are no signs of tourism, light industry, or any other urban-oriented economic strategies that are so common to Ireland's island regions, and Quinn certainly shows plenty of the island's craggy hills and rocky shores. Perhaps most importantly, Quinn makes it clear how tightly knit the community is, and how much at its centre the parish priest is. But these signifiers of antiquity – older forms of competition, older forms of work, images of an empty landscape, a focus on a tightly knit community life, even the use of sepia-toned stock for the flashbacks sections of the film – are not elaborated, or even lingered on. The boat race is photographed in ways that maximize its kinetic and pictorial value, using medium shots that follow alongside the boats as they move through the water and close ups of the oars as they move through the water and of the men's faces (in a way that almost recalls Riefenstahl's *Olympia*). But the sequence is quickly integrated into the film's narrative drive, as the priest gets punched in the face when he breaks up a fight between the contestants; this serves as an omen that bad things are coming. Similarly, the landscape is photographed in long shots that make the characters seem like little specks amid the rough beauty of the island, but Quinn holds these long shots for only a short time before moving into medium shots that advance the narrative in a not-quite-Classical-Hollywood-Cinema sort of way. These shots clearly communicate that the place is impoverished but still beautiful in its way, but their brevity encourages his viewer to internalise that fact, and to move on. Indeed, he refers to the place as a "Godforsaken island" at the beginning of the film. The community on the island feels quite impoverished – all the houses are small and run down, and just about the only vehicles we see are beat-up trucks – but we don't really know the details. Being poor, embattled and, yes, a little bit Godforsaken is just a fact of non-touristic non-urban life, a kind of life that has almost completely vanished now as the gentrification of Ireland's west is nearing completion. Quinn seems to think it not worth dwelling on for melodramatic/emotional impact.

But in what way is any of this *ethnographic*? How does this fundamentally narrative film engage in a semi-anthropological investigation of modernity in remote areas? Bill Nichols defines ethnographic film in a way that is particularly useful for my purposes here, writing that such films "are extra-institutional, ... address an audience larger than anthropologists per se ... may be made by individuals more trained in film making than in anthropology, and accept as a primary task the representation or self-representation of one culture for another" (1994:66). The first three points seem to me self-evident: *The Bishop's Story* is a semi-fictional film and so not confined to the institutions of cultural anthropology, and it is made by someone who was formed as a filmmaker for Ireland's state-owned TV service Radio Telefís Éireann (RTÉ), not as an anthropologist. The fourth point, the matter of interpreting one culture for another, is less clearly present, but by looking for it, and so finding the ambiguity of this aspect of the film's interpretive work, we get a good sense of what Quinn is up to politically. There is more going on here than using the details of non-urban life for spectacle or narrative grist, as a Classical Hollywood film would (or as *The Quiet Man*, that *bête noire* of Irish independent film, does). Throughout

The Bishop's Story, there is a push and pull between whether the viewer is meant to read the images of traditional, non-urban life, like the boat race, the reliance on small water craft for everyday existence, and the paganistic religion that many of the islanders cling to, as explaining the narrative, or whether the narrative is meant to explain these images of non-urban life to a national and international viewership. *The Bishop's Story* was, after all, finished on the fairly expensive medium of 35mm film; even the less expensive 16mm film *Poitín*, would depend somewhat on having an international viewership. The cues to interpret the film as ethnographic explanation and as narrative are *both* present, but they are also both less present than in a conventional example of either ethnography or narrative film.

With *The Bishop's Story*, then, Quinn is trying to re-write the conventions of narrative film along ethnographic lines. He also takes this project as seriously as many Québec filmmakers of the 1960s (and, for that matter, a good deal more seriously than, say, the filmmakers associated with the Danish Dogme 95 movement) who similarly tried to re-fashion narrative cinematic form in a way that incorporated documentary techniques. Indeed, writing about the revision of documentary form in Perrault's *Pour la suite du monde*, Robert Daudlin asserts that "Perrault's cinema 'fictionalises' reality; it uses the methods of the direct, and only those, to create actual fictions which nevertheless aspire to the status of documentaries" (1980:100). This seems to me more true of *The Bishop's Story*. Quinn's film is indeed a fiction, shot in a more or less pre-planned way, edited more or less along the lines of Classical Hollywood, and even going an extra step to announce its artificiality with the use of intertitles. And yet, it does aspire to the status of documentary: its ethnographic value is palatable (who knew that people on Connemara still took boat racing so seriously?) and while it certainly has a narrative drive, the film is equally an impressionistic portrait of an anachronistic community facing modernity. As we will see with *Pour la suite du monde* (and most of Perrault's films, for that matter), the overall effect of the film is to call into question the validity of terms like "fiction" and "documentary." This ambiguity is at the heart of what Catherine Russell calls "experimental ethnography," and she finds Jean Rouch's use of the term "science fiction" helpful in explaining the hybridised genre that gives her book its title. "For Rouch, the incorporation of 'fiction' into ethnography is a metaphor for subjectivity, desire, fantasy, and imagination that might be fused with the empirical, indexical documentary image. Beyond mere truth, cinéma verité could potentially produce a new reality, a science fiction blending objective science and subjective art" (219).

What I would argue about *The Bishop's Story* overall, then, is that it is about the collision of modernity and tradition, made with an aesthetic sensibility that is itself a collision of scientific/ethnographic and fictional impulses. The priest finds himself undone less by the islanders themselves than by the urban-based Catholic hierarchy that controls their spiritual life; throughout the film Quinn goes out of his way, although not too far out of his way, to show us how different life on this island is from the life of urban Ireland. Writing in *Film Ireland*, Quinn recalled that this story

> ... appealed to me because it revealed the unique tolerance towards sexual peccadilloes that I had long discovered existed in Conamara and which survived in no other community in this theocratic State. There were few grey areas. The story was black and white, freshness versus tradition, innocence versus the monolith. There were no anti-heroes, no ambiguous sex, no vicarious violence, no Northern backdrop.
> (8)

Thematic matters in *The Bishop's Story* are, I think, more complicated than Quinn suggests here, although the binaries he alludes to provide an interesting entrance into the film. For Quinn, Clare Island is a place where the struggles of modern Irish society are being hashed out; where people seek cultural and spiritual autonomy at the same time that they incorporate modernity. This split between modernity and autonomy, however, are left unresolved; these two conditions bleed into one another. Films that are black and white, after all, are seldom that; like the silver emulsion that once lined the celluloid, they are mostly grey. Indeed, *The Bishop's Story* is one big grey area, a statement that islands, once thought of the repository of Ireland's national soul, are complex, embattled places, unarguably important and still central to an understanding of the life of the nation but also badly misunderstood by most of its inhabitants.

There is a very similar project at the heart of Pierre Perrault's most famous film *Pour la suite du monde.* The first installment of his Île-aux-Coudres trilogy, this film centres on the revival of a whale hunt on that small island in the St. Lawrence. As I mentioned before, Perrault adopted for this film a kind of updated version of Flaherty's methodology, documenting a hunting technique that was long extinct, but openly acknowledging this essentially artificial character within the film itself. Co-directed by Bernard Gosselin and Michel Brault (who had worked as a cameraman for Jean Rouch on *Chronique d'un été* [1960]), the film has at its core, like *The Bishop's Story*, a tension between narrative and non-narrative aspirations. On one level *Pour la suite du monde* is quite linear, following the hunt from its planning to its realisation to the delivery of the whale to an aquarium in New York. At the same time, though, the film's sensibility is quite poetic, with Perrault often using very long takes and dwelling on certain meticulously composed images for no clear narrative reason. This poetic quality marks an important difference from the tougher, more pared down feel of *The Bishop's Story,* whose non-narrative-ness derives from a connection to documentary portraiture rather than poetry as such. *Pour la suite du monde* has a number of very famous shots – an extreme long shot of the islanders stacking the poles into the water at dusk (in 1996 that image appeared on a Canadian stamp), shots of the winter festival where the islanders wear bright white masks and go from house to house, or shots of Louis Tremblay Sr. (Grand Louis) collecting Easter water and then giving it out to puzzled little kids. The film is also notable for its use of subtitles. The islanders are all allowed to speak at great length (a characterising feature of Perrault's style, which has come to be known as the *cinéma de la parole*), but they speak a dialect of French that is to say the least distinct, and so the subtitles of the film's French version transcribe what they say into standard Québec French.

While the value of Île-aux-Coudres might seem to lie in its status as a pre-modern paradise (along the lines of what we see in Proulx's films), Perrault's insistence on being self-reflexive about the re-created nature of the hunt is entirely consistent with the hybridised portrait of the island that he creates. There are more signifiers of antiquity in *Pour la suite du monde* (such as shots of horse drawn sleds, or archaic rituals like the winter festival of the masks or the gathering of Easter Water) than in *The Bishop's Story*, but Perrault adopts just as melancholy and conflicted a view of the island's relation to modernity as does Quinn. The film's title comes from a sequence where a few men are sitting around talking about why they should revive the porpoise hunt, and Grand-Louis opines to the local priest that "Nous autres... nous autres... d'après not'expérience, père Abel, *on fait quelque chose pour la suite du monde*" (reproduced in Brûlé 1971a:19, italics Brûlé's) [We others... we others... according to our experience, Abel, we do something so that the world can continue]. This sounds very idealistic indeed, but Michel Brûlé argues that it is in fact reflective of a certain pessimism that lies at the core of the film. He writes that:

> Tout le film se trouve éclairé par cette perspective d'une suite du monde à construire, d'une suite du monde à assurer car le monde, c'est-à-dire une certaine formation et organisation sociale, est en danger. On verra dans le film que, contrairement à une époque révolue, la suite du monde ne va plus de soi, qu'elle est devenue incertaine et problématique. Les traces... sont en train de se perdre. Quelque chose doit être fait pour assurer une suite, pour éviter une rupture avec un monde qui a été construit de peine et de misère. Il est donc question ici du *passé d'un monde* et de son *avenir problématique*. (1971a:19, emphases his)
>
> [The entire film is clarified by this perspective of constructing a continuation of the world, of a continuation of the world to be assured because the world, which is to say a certain formation and social organisation, is in danger. We see in this film that, contrary to a past time, the continuation of the world no longer goes without saying, that it has become uncertain and problematic. The traces... are in the process of being lost. Something has to be done to ensure a continuation, to avoid a rupture with a world that has been built from pain and misery. It is

> therefore a question here of the *past of a world* and of its *problematic future.*]

Indeed, if there is an argument being made by *Pour la suite du monde*, it is that this world of traditional hunting techniques and oral culture is disappearing and very badly needs to be preserved, if only through visual records like a film, or through oral records like the knowledge of how to hunt for porpoises. Despite talk of economic stagnation and images of the bleak landscape, that sense of impending collapse does not hang over *The Bishop's Story* in quite the same way.[4] *Pour la suite du monde*, then, is treading on some ambiguous ground, trying to preserve and celebrate a vanishing culture without romanticising it or appropriating it for an emerging nationalist project, trying to make the most out of cutting edge lightweight cameras and sound gear without losing the subjective voice of the filmmakers. Of the three films of the Île-aux-Coudres trilogy, *Pour la suite du monde* is certainly the most folkloric, since *Le Règne du jour* deals with a trip to France and *Les Voitures d'eau* deals quite explicitly with the shifting of the maritime economy. But less than an indulgence in the kind of folklore that defined an earlier tradition of ethnography in Québec, Perrault is entering into a dialogue with this sort of imagery, trying to recover what is beautiful and lyrical about it and being clear that he is conducting an active inquiry into both this culture and his own image-making processes. Complaining about the use of *cinéma vérité* aesthetics by Appalshop, a renowned media arts workshop in the Appalachian mountains of Kentucky (whose working methods were heavily influenced by the National Film Board of Canada, particularly the "Challenge for Change" program), Jane Gaines has written that

> ...unlike the ethnographic or folklore-record films, the Appalshop folk documentaries in some instances actually thread the cultural transmission process into the film itself, making the "handing down" aspect explicit rather than implicit. This incorporation of part of the process is one solution to the *cinéma vérité* restrictions. Giving the cultural recipient a part in the film gets around the *vérité* ban on the intruding presence of ethnographer or interviewer, but it also has the effect of smoothing over the whole so that none of the rough edges of the transmission process seem evident.
> (56)

Perrault is not creating a new kind of classical, realist aesthetic, a kind of Classical Vérité Cinema that Gaines sees emerging in Appalshop documentaries. Instead, he is integrating the process of film making into the film itself, and not just by showing the filmmakers or sound people from time to time. His process leaves most of the film's rough edges intact; consider for example the footage of town meetings or small group discussions where locals discuss whether the revival of the hunt is a good idea. Further, the lyrical, poetic impulses for which Perrault is so famous also represent a departure from a traditional *vérité* idea. The opening sequence, with boats pulling into port, is assembled very carefully: Perrault cuts between highly composed long shots and extreme long shots of the decks and hulls of the boats against the snowy, rugged landscape and a medium close up of the ship captain on the radio, bidding the controller in Québec City farewell for another winter. This is not the stuff of transparent, "truthful" documentation, although there are many such moments that do aspire to that status – sequences such as of the church auction to raise money for missionaries or the dance where a caller is held in a shaky close up and the dancers, also filmed with shaky cameras, are awkwardly composed, are examples of a more straightforwardly *vérité* idea. These painterly images and controlling editing are the work of a self-conscious artist who is, with his highly proficient cameraman Michel Brault (who worked for Jean Rouch on *Chronique d'une été*), exploring what the relatively new technology of lightweight cameras and sound gear can do. The aestheticising of island life, alternating with the use of a very pared down documentary style (which looked especially unusual in 1963) makes it clear that Perrault is not a pioneer of a pious, we-seers-tell-the-truth type of *vérité* orthodoxy. Instead, he is a follower of that renowned French ethnographic filmmaker Jean Rouch, seeking to put people in semi-fictional situations that echo their own lives, situations that not only document a culture but illuminate the interior lives of the people who make up a culture, and drawing on a style that is associated neither entirely with fiction nor entirely with documentary.

Quinn's *Poitín*, perhaps even more than *The Bishop's Story*, is also drawing on what I would regard as an essentially Rouchian aesthetic. Brian Winston has written that "[i]n a film begun in 1954 (and completed in 1967 as *Jaguar*), Rouch tested how the 'real' people with whom he was working might respond in some fictional settings. He wanted thereby to illuminate something otherwise not filmable – their mental states" (182). The usually very traditional ethnographer Karl Heider oddly sees this impulse at the heart of the ethnographic project, writing that "[t]he major strength of the ethnographic film is its ability to focus on peak events of interpersonal relationships and so explore in detail the dynamics of emotions as they are played out" (27). *Poitín*, which features mostly non-professional actors playing roles that would be very similar to their daily existence, is all about the mental and emotional state of Gaeltacht dwellers. The two main characters (Niall Tóibín and Donal McCann) are nominally employed by an old poitín maker (Cyril Cusack), but they also collect the dole and generally lead lives of bored troublemakers. Indeed, a great deal of the film is given over to slow portrayals of everyday life in Connemara – there is much less of a narrative drive than in *The Bishop's Story*. In this way, *Poitín* is also closer to *Pour la suite du monde,* not only for its use of documentary aesthetics but for the way that it is so divided by narrative and non-narrative impulses. Overall, *Poitín* seems much less about the doings of a couple of moonshine middlemen than it is a portrayal of the *ennui* of life in Connemara. Consequently, the climax of the film, the sequence that is the most protracted and drawn out, is not when the distiller discovers the treachery of his henchmen, but when Niall Tóibín's character unsuccessfully tries to rape the distiller's daughter, only to have her laugh at his sexual incapacity. Shot in a series of awkwardly composed long takes, the sequence feels rushed and unsteady, and seems to go on *forever*. Even though it's got little to contribute to the narrative, this sequence is a much more striking part of *Poitín* than the sequence that brings the story to a head, when the distiller decides to take matters into his own hands and tricks his henchmen into drowning themselves. That bit is more straightforward, emphasising long shots but edited and executed with relative efficiency. The rape sequence is more striking, and feels more important to the film overall, because it contributes, in a very visceral way, to an understanding of the inner life of the characters, and to a sense of how brutal and frustrating life on these islands can be.

The sequence where the middlemen sell their ill-gotten poitín at the village is also quite Rouchian. Although clearly staged, the scene consists mostly of people (played almost entirely by locals, not by actors) doing what people do in a village square: chatting, standing around, bargaining over donkeys. Shot in a way that departs from Classical Hollywood norms (Quinn jumps around a lot, and his objective here seems more impressionistic than narrative), the sequence is not really shot following documentary norms either: the shots are fairly short, and Quinn uses close ups of money changing hands, shots that are clearly tagged as fictional. This section of *Poitín* is reminiscent of the conclusion of *Pour la suite du monde*, when word gets out that the islanders have caught a porpoise. There are bits that are candid, such as when they get porpoise onto the boats, but there are also bits that are obviously staged, even though the subjects don't act aware of the camera. These include the sequence where a group of old men talk about how they're showing the youngsters they're still worth something; here, a truck drives up with Grand-Louis in it, and Perrault cuts to him getting out and talking to the other old timers; the arrival was clearly planned out in advance and shot with several cameras. In a sequence shortly thereafter, Louis talks to his grandson Léopold about how he can't go to New York because he wants to vote Liberal one last time. We see Léopold walk up to his grandfather in a long shot, and there is a reverse shot as they sit down to start to talk; the image itself is strikingly framed, against piles of drying peat, and even though the two men are always fairly far away from the camera, they are perfectly miked; the editing, then, and the sound, to say nothing of the composition of the image, suggest *significant* preparation on the part of the filmmakers. Most interestingly, there are many sequences that are somewhere in-between prepared and candid, such as when Léopold is at his house calling Québec City; we can hear the voice of the other end of the phone call, also suggesting significant preparation on the part of the filmmakers, and it is cut in a way that is rhythmic and focussed, even featuring eyeline matches; the phone conversation, however, appears genuine, and important to the process of dealing with the whale. These sequences in the Perrault film, like the market sequence, and other scenes like it, in *Poitín*, have people acting in situations that are more or less fictional, but which are simultaneously more or less representative of their actual existence.

It is this aspect of Perrault's work that caught the eye of Gilles Deleuze, who writes quite a bit about the Québécois filmmaker in his *Cinema 2: L'Image-Temps*. He could also be talking about Bob Quinn when he writes that:

> ...quand Perrault critique toute fiction, c'est au sens où elle forme un modèle de vérité préétabli, qui exprime nécessairement les idées dominantes ou le point de vue du colonisateur, même quand elle est forgée par l'auteur du film... Quand Perrault s'adresse à ses personnages réels du Québec, ce n'est pas seulement pour éliminer la fiction, mais pour la libérer du modèle de vérité qui la pénètre, et retrouver au contraire la pure et simple *fonction de fabulation* qui s'oppose à ce modèle... Ce que le cinéma doit saisir, ce n'est pas l'identité d'un personnage, réel ou fictif, à travers ses aspects objectifs et subjectifs. C'est le devenir du personnage réel quand il se met lui-même à « fictionner », quand il entre « en flagrant délit de légender » et contribue ainsi à l'invention de son peuple.
> (196)

> [...when Perrault criticizes all fiction, it is in the sense that it forms a model of pre-established truth, which necessarily expresses the dominant ideas or the point of view of the colonizer, even when it is forged by the film's author... When Perrault is addressing his real characters of Québec, it is not simply to eliminate fiction but to free it from the model of truth which penetrates it, and on the contrary to rediscover the pure and simple *story-telling function* which is opposed to this model... What cinema must grasp is not the identity of a character, whether real *or* fictional, through his objective and subjective aspects. It is the becoming of the real character when he himself starts to "make fiction," when he enters into the "flagrant offence of making up legends" and so contributes to the invention of his people.]
> (Tomlinson and Galeta translation, 150)

The concept of storytelling is central to Deleuze's schema of cinematic narrative: he writes later that "[l]a fabulation n'est pas un mythe impersonnel, mais n'est pas non plus une fiction personnelle : c'est une parole en acte, une acte de parole par lequel le personnage ne cesse de franchir la frontière qui séparerait son affaire privée de la politique, et *produit lui-même les énoncés collectifs*" (289) [Story telling is not an impersonal myth, but neither is it a personal fiction: it is in a word an act, a speech-act through which the character continually crosses the boundary which would separate his private business from politics, and which *itself produces collective utterances* {Tomlinson and Galeta translation, 222}]. What we see in these films by both Quinn and Perrault is precisely the production of collective utterances, the production of a kind of auto-ethnography, since they are part of, but also outside, the cultures they are documenting, cultures they are documenting *both* for internal and international viewerships. Russell sees a very radical consciousness at the heart of this kind of auto-ethnographic activity, writing that "[t]he oxymoronic label 'autoethnography' announces a total breakdown of the colonialist precepts of ethnography, and indeed the critical enthusiasm for its various forms situates it as a kind of ideal form of antidocumentary" (277).

What we also see is that island life is highly complex, always part of a series of negotiations with modernity and its arguable aesthetic companion, realist form. Deleuze finds Perrault interesting because of the way that he moves between the archeology of minority discourse and the transformation of cinematic form, removing the truth imperative from documentary. Quinn is doing something very similar, trying to find not only images but also a cinematic strategy that will start to undo the history of marginalisation and condescension that defines the histories and representations of the Gaeltacht. Indeed, Heider, in writing about *Pour la suite du monde*'s English version *The Moontrap*[5] could also be writing about *The Bishop's Story* or *Poitín* when he asserts that "*The Moontrap* has the best of two worlds; It does record in detail an interesting and unusual technological process of the past... and it manages to show how that technological process is embedded in its social context" (60). Heider could have added that Perrault, and, for that matter, Quinn, show how the documentation of that process is also embedded in an aesthetic process. Quinn and Perrault have a double task, being both about about the small details of the cultures they document and engaging in broader, socio-cultural illustration. Echoing that classic philosophical puzzle, the hermeneutic circle, their films are engaged in a constant movement between these two impulses.

IV. Dispersions

Although Quinn and Perrault have made a career out of chronicling the most isolated regions of their respective nations, they have also made films about the international reach of that experience. Some of these have dealt with national origins, some with the idea and experience of diaspora, but in both cases we can see that Quinn and Perrault have a very flexible, mobile visualisation of national belonging; that visualisation also remains resistant to mainstream, sometimes dominance-oriented ideas of globalisation for its flexibility or mobility. The vision of globalism that we see here is based in uncertainty and argument, not clarity and uniformity. Using hybridised, unconventional forms of documentary, they are trying to convince their viewers of the tentative, malleable nature of nation.

Although films like *Poitín* and *The Bishop's Story* had modest domestic distribution, Quinn is probably best known in the Republic of Ireland for the three-part television series *Atlantean*, produced in 1983 for RTÉ, and its sequel, *Atlantean 2: Navigato* (1997). In the 1983 series he focusses on the north African roots of the Irish, arguing that they are descended not from the Celts but from the people of the Maghreb, who share a common dependence on the Atlantic Ocean (the 1997 series focusses on the Baltics). He travels through Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt and, of course, all over Ireland in search of evidence for this hypothesis, whose tentative, uncertain nature he makes clear throughout the film. *Atlantean*'s form is basically that of an educational documentary, but with a few important divergences, chief among them its departure from an objective, pedagogical form. The film opens with a most ridiculous image: Quinn, a bearded, tweed-hat-wearing Irishman, dancing awkwardly with a very aged Moroccan man. While *Atlantean* uses many of the tropes of the Discovery-Channel type program (interviews with experts from museums and universities, sequences shot on animation cameras with maps showing possible migration patterns, etc.), it also features elements such as montage sequences of landscapes or people with Quinn's voice-over throughout, sometimes telling us how he often thought that the whole idea seemed "eccentric" or "foolish," but other times telling us how the Irish people are reluctant to conceive of such ideas in part because of their "colonised minds." He finds especially important points of contact between Irish and Arabic (which he claims are closer than Irish and English), between traditional *sean-nós* songs and traditional Arabic singing, and, most important for his theory that this pattern of descent can be explained by the history of the Irish as a sea-faring people, by the layout of a two-piece sail found both in coastal North Africa and on the western shore of Ireland, especially in Connemara.

Regardless of the veracity or scientific provability of Quinn's theories about Irish origins, *Atlantean* is important for my purposes because of the way that it challenges both the conventions of scientific objectivity and of national belonging, showing both to be constructions. Indeed, the key to the *Atlantean* series can be found at the end of the book that Quinn wrote as a companion to the series. He asserts that

> As we find ourselves being fitted, modular-like, into a consumer world – be it as citizens of the US, the USSR, the EEC or any other conglomeration – we are forced to look desperately for evidence of our uniqueness as persons and peoples. But this should not prevent us – indeed must encourage us – to admit at all times that every nation, big or small, is a concoction, an arbitrary mixture of cultures and races, each of whose constituent parts is indispensable to the overall flavour. (177)

This middle position – that nations are necessary and have some basis in physical reality at the same time that they are also arbitrary and culturally mixed, echoes a lot of recent scholarly work around the concept of the nation (which I discussed in the introduction). I can hear some of Aijiz Ahmad in *Atlantean*'s nationalist revisionism, especially when Ahmad writes that:

> ...one interrogates minority nationalisms, religious and linguistic and regional nationalisms, transnational nationalisms (for example, Arab nationalism) neither by privileging some transhistorical right to statehood based on linguistic difference or territorial identity, nor by denying, in the post-structuralist manner, the historical reality of the sedimentations which do in fact give particular collectivities of people real civilizational identities. Rather, one strives for a rationally argued understanding of social content and historical project for each particular nationalism. (11)

This kind of balancing act, between the reality of social content and the shifting historical projects that have created an Irish national self, is at the core of *Atlantean*. Quinn is seeking not so much to recover a "true" Irish nationality, but to draw his viewer's attention to the fact that the "old" national ideas have been used for political purposes, sometimes for colonising purposes (he has lots of bile for the English antiquarians who tried to manufacture a lost Rome in Ireland). He is doing this through a reliance on the sedimentations of a shared material and cultural history, evinced by sail design, songs, and linguistic structures, and while he's not calling the legitimacy of the Irish Republic into question, his film does serve as an argument for the State to better recognize a reality of Ireland that derives from an extra-territorial history – the reliance on the North Atlantic. *Atlantean*, like *The Bishop's Story* and *Poitín*, is a very odd form of nationalist agitation: it calls the most basic parts of the national idea into question not in order to completely undermine the idea of nationality, but to call for a more nuanced and open view of what its maker clearly thinks of as a very important concept.

This is also the project of the second film in Perrault's Île-aux-Coudres trilogy, *Le Règne du jour* (1966), a film that follows Alexis Tremblay, his wife Marie-Paule and their son Léopold on a trip to France in search of their Norman ancestors. The trip has mixed effects. It shows Marie-Paul's emergence as a character in her own right (she, like women in Perrault's work generally, was almost completely silent in *Pour la suite du monde*), but it is also something of a disappointment for Alexis, as illustrated metaphorically when the grandfather clock he brings home from France doesn't work. The film dwells on the different methods of farming used in Normandy and on Île-aux-Coudres, and the images of pig slaughtering seem to offer some real connection between the two diasporas. Indeed, in drawing attention to the film's privileging of their common agricultural existence and the common socio-cultural placement of that existence, Bill Marshall has pointed out that:

> The peasants of the Perche region between Paris and Normandy speak non-standard French in a manner analogous to the Québécois. The

> connection being made in the film is one that leapfrogs over the French Revolution and the creation of the modern, centralised French nation state. It is a discussion between two peripheries.
> (79)

This discussion represents a very peculiar, conflicted take on the Québec/France relationship. As Marshall points out, there is a sense that Perrault and the Tremblays have gone in search of a pre-colonial, pre-modern France, just the kind of essentialist, nationalist myth that politically minded filmmakers might be expected to resist. But both Alexis and Léopold seem to find the trip disappointing; their distance from their ancestors is emphasised by footage of an aristocratic fox hunt, and we see images of Alexis explaining it to his friends back on Île-aux-Coudres. This is not the trans-nationalist *francophonie* that they had hoped to find, nor the homeland where they might come to better understand their origins. Instead, the France that the Tremblays find ends up disorienting them, sometimes for better (gender roles get modestly revised Marie-Paul gets to step outside of the hardworking, silent life that she leads on Île-aux-Coudres) and sometimes for worse (the distance between Québec and France, culturally if not always linguistically, comes to seem much more significant).

Deleuze has an interesting, Kafka-esque take on this quandary that is also relevant for *Atlantean*:

> Chez Pierre Perrault... il s'agit de recherches obstinées plutôt que de pulsions brutales... Toute se passe comme si le cinéma politique moderne ne se constituait plus sur une possibilité d'évolution et de révolution, comme le cinéma classique, mais sur des impossibilités, à la manière de Kafka : l'intolérable... c'est une condition qui fait de Comolli un véritable cinéaste politique quand il prend pour objet une double impossibilité, celle

> de faire groupe *et* celle de ne pas faire groupe, « l'impossibilité d'échapper au groupe et l'impossibilité de s'en satisfaire » (L'ombre rouge) (285-286, parentheses his)
>
> [In Pierre Perrault... it is a matter of stubborn quests rather than violent drives... It is as if a modern political cinema were no longer constituted on the basis of a possibility of evolution and revolution, like the classical cinema, but on impossibilities, like in the style of Kafka: *the intolerable*... it is a condition that makes Comolli a true political film-maker when he takes as his object a double impossibility, that of forming a group *and* that of not forming a group, "the impossibility of escaping from the group and the impossibility of being satisfied with it" (*L'ombre rouge*).] (Tomlinson and Galeta translation, 219)

This impossibility is what the Tremblay family come to discover on their trip to France. Bob Quinn is trying to challenge the factual basis of national myths; Perrault's critique of these myths is more moderate. Trying to better understand the relation between France and Québec is much less of an assault on the idea of a national self than the argument that the Irish aren't really European but North African in descent. However, Perrault's call for Québec to more clearly understand, and therefore have more doubts about, the way that its origin myth relates to its present, and its future, is no less pronounced than Quinn's.

This call is more fully developed in one of Perrault's most formally and politically ambitious films, *Un pays sans bon sens!* (1970). This dense, essayistic film follows several sets of people, including Maurice Chaillot, a young Franco-Albertan now living in Paris, Didier Dufour, a scientist who sees the behaviour of lab mice as a metaphor for Québec history, a group of lumberjacks and caribou hunters, a family of Huron who live on Sept-Isles and find that there's very little wilderness in which they can practice their traditional lifestyles, a group of Bretons struggling for greater autonomy within France who find the cause of

Québec independence very interesting indeed, and, of course, René Levesque,[6] who is making a tour through Manitoba to explain Québec separatism to English Canada. The film is in many ways, then, about the concept of *pays*, and the varying ways that people express national belonging. It is loosely held together by a voice-over and title cards that divide it into three sections, "L'Appartenance à l'album," "Le Refus de l'album" and "Le Retour à l'album." This film marks a significant break with the *cinéma direct* style of the Île-aux-Coudres trilogy. While there is plenty of wandering camera and long, rambling discussions, the sense of subjectivity is much more pronounced than what we see even in *Le règne du jour*, which features sequences whose editing often emphasises the differences between Québec and France, such as when Léopold is describing the aristocratic fox hunt back on Île-aux-Coudres. Here we see images of the hunt, but his voice is on the soundtrack and we occasionally move back to the island; the disjuncture between sound and image, even without the added imagery of Île-aux-Coudres, is palatable. Gilles Marsolais points out that "[c]omme dans *Le Règne du jour* (le monteur est le même pour les deux films), le spectateur est soumis à un montage haché, mais sans y retrouver la même nécessité fondamentale tout au long du récit" (110) [like in *Le Règne du jour* (the editor is the same for both films), the viewer is submitted to a broken up style of editing, but without finding the same fundamental necessity as the story unfolds]. One sequence, which introduces us to Maurice, now living in Paris, features him complaining about stereotypes of backward, rural French Canadians; this is cross cut, retaining his voice over, to images of life on Île-aux-Coudres, where it is clear that life is still quite rustic.

That sequence opens with Léopold Tremblay talking about how for him France is home, and if things ever got really bad here they could pack up and go to France. How to read this? Is Perrault making fun of Léopold's naive view of France, since Maurice seems to think that islanders would likely find life in Paris less than familiar? Is Perrault pointing out Maurice's own insecurity about being French-Canadian? This sequence shows us just how insecure Maurice is in his own French identity: he recalls at one point how as a child he was horribly embarrassed that his mother spoke French to him on the bus, and he came to France hoping to re-connect with an identity that he had been, in western Canada, unable to express. We also see how almost embarrassingly enthusiastic about European French culture Maurice is, as he waxes poetic about how everything here is charged with sex. Is Perrault making fun of both Maurice and Léopold? Is he in all seriousness exposing the painful contradictions of being a North American Francophone? It's just not clear. The comparison with the editing of *Le règne du jour* is informative: Perrault seems to be moving from a comparison of frustrations (not exactly a happy emotion, but not a difficult one to evoke clearly) to images of frustration and fragmentation. Or, to put it in a more optimistic, and more comparative, way: Perrault is coming closer here to the idea of nation as montage that permeates *Atlantean*. This move towards a montage idea is especially interesting given my argument that Perrault and Quinn are following the modernist anthropological idea set out by George E. Marcus. Marcus thinks that montage is a very useful metaphor for current trends in ethnography, arguing at one point that "anthropological representations, as claims to knowledge, now exist in a complex matrix of dialogic engagement with diverse representations, interests and claims to knowledge concerning the same objects of study" (39). The romantic quest for French ancestors, and for the clarity that historical research of all kinds is supposed to bring, has failed. On with the cultural fragmentation and collision of the real world!

Onward, in short, with what the Martiniquan novelist and critic Édouard Glissant calls *le divers*, a condition that he argues is central to the condition of the Carribean but also part of contemporary life all over the world ("Le monde se créolise," he wrote in 1995 [15]). In *Le discours antillais*, he writes that

> Le Divers, qui n'est pas le chaotique ni le stérile, signifie l'effort de l'esprit humain vers une relation transversale, sans transcendance universaliste. Le Divers a besoin de la présence des peuples, non plus comme objet à sublimer, mais comme projet à mettre en relation... On ne peut pas se faire trinidadien ni québécois, si on ne l'est pas ; mais il est désormais vrai que si la Trinidad ou le Québec n'existaient pas comme composantes acceptées du Divers, il manquerait quelque chose à la chair du monde.
> (1997:327)
>
> [*Le Divers*, which is neither the chaotic nor the sterile, signifies the effort of the human spirit towards a crossing, without universal transcendence. *Le Divers* needs the presence of peoples, no longer objects to sublimate, but as a project to put into relationships... You can't become Trinidadians or Québécoises, if you aren't Trinidadian or Québécois; but from now on it's true that if Trinidad or Québec didn't exist as accepted composites of *Le Divers*, something of the flesh of the world would be missing.]

Although neither Perrault nor Quinn have any interest in the Caribbean (judging from their films, anyway, which make no reference to the region), what they are trying to evoke and argue about can, I believe, be meaningfully understood through the lens of the Caribbean's cultural condition. Chris Bongie has argued that this conclusion is inescapable: "this foundational encounter makes it [the

Caribbean] a site that has, from its very beginnings, borne witness to a relational way of life that no one, in the late twentieth-century world of the 'new global economy' can now avoid confronting" (23). These filmmakers were confronting this global imperative in the 1970s and 80s, when American dominance was certainly familiar to all, but globalisation as we know it today was as yet unnamed. Their films about inter/national roots, in stressing the importance and the fundamental complexity of their national myths in an international context, are offering both a preview of that condition and a solution to the homogenising and isolationist extremes that these myths have too often produced.

Perrault poses a special problem here, because there is a way in which his films could be recovered to serve a nostalgic, *pure laine* approach to Québec identity, since they engage with a French, rural experience and not an urban, non-French/non-white one (a similar argument could be made about Quinn, who deals with the lives of rural Gaels and not, say, Protestants in Galway or the growing African community in Dublin). An argument over these kinds of questions erupted briefly following Perrault's death, in the pages of the newspaper *La Presse* and the film magazine *24 Images*. Writing about in *La Presse* about the meaning of Perrault dying on the day of the final fête nationale of the 20th century, Nathalie Petrowski asserted that "[c]e n'est plus le Québec pure laine de la pêche au marsouin, des voitures de l'eau, et des bœufs musqués des films de Pierre Perrault. C'est un Québec coloré, métissé, polymorphe, urbain.... Je dis enfin que ce pays mythique dont il nous a fait cadeau pour la suite du monde, en quelque sorte est parti avec lui" (B5) [this is no longer an old stock Québec of the porpoise hunters, the water-craft, and the musk-oxen of Pierre Perrault's films. This is a Québec that is colourful, mixed, polymorph, urban.... Finally I am saying that the mythic country that he gave to us as a gift so that the world might continue, has in a way left with him]. What she seems to be forgetting is that this world didn't really exist when Perrault was making films either; as I have discussed, it had to be re-constructed, and the re-constructed nature of the world of "la pêche au marsouin," and the melancholy of that world's already-occurred collapse, are quite clear in his films. More to the point, though, there is no doubt that there is a multi-cultural element to Québec that Perrault may seem blind to, and the effect that immigration has had upon Québec society in the last three decades has indeed been enormous. But I hardly think that this call for a hipper, more *au courant* approach to Québec identity and the announcement of the death of the "pays mythique" that lies outside urbanised areas is tenable as a basis to launch an attack on Perrault's legacy. Indeed, this critique misses the crucial task Perrault's films, a task he shares with Quinn: to show that rural (often island) communities, far from being at the heart of the national imaginary, are actually quite marginalised, by virtue of their linguistic distinctiveness, their economic underdevelopment, and their conflicted relationship with modernity. Instead of proposing a *pure laine* approach to Québec (or a *fior-ghael* approach to Ireland), these films are portraits of the edge of identity, portraits of communities that are, in their own way, as badly misunderstood and the subject of as much indifference on the part of the metropolitan centre (although certainly not as explicitly discriminated against) as the Haitian community in Montréal or the Nigerian community in Dublin. This is also true of the Appalshop documentaries that I mentioned earlier, which could be seen as part of a project to re-construct a more "pure" United States in the Appalachian mountains, but which are actually highly detailed portraits of economically underdeveloped communities that are highly marginalised both geographically and culturally.

Marco de Blois responded to Petrowski's column and similar posthumous attacks on the contemporary meaning of Perrault's imagery in a brief article in *24 Images*, scoffing at the ahistorical piety that dismissals of his work sometimes seem to embody. "Ah! la bonne conscience!" he sarcastically writes. He also asserts that "[s]i on fait un survol rapide de ce qui s'est écrit sur le cinéma dans les médias d'ici, la notion de métissage dans les films aurait été inventée vers 1995... Alors qu'il y a sûrement autant de « métissage » dans un film de Michka Säal, d'Arto Paragamian, de Robert Morin, de Jacques Leduc, de Pierre Perrault..." (27) [if you do a quick skim through the writing on cinema in the local media, then it seems that the notion of *métissage* in the cinema was invented around 1995... But there is surely as much "métissage" in a film by Michka Saäl, Arto Paragamian, Robert Morin, Jacques Leduc, or Pierre Perrault]. This quick list of Québec filmmakers, who have dealt with Québec's middle eastern community (Saäl, *La Position de l'escargot* [1999]), its English-speaking community (Paragamian, *Because Why* [1993], *Two Thousand and None* [2000]), and people with multiple identities (Leduc, *La Vie fantôme* [1992]), and who have also made formally eccentric, bi-lingual, semi-narrative, semi-fake-documentary videos which also use footage shot on film (Morin, *Yes Sir Madame!* [1994]), indicates that de Blois has a much broader and more open sense of what *métissage* in cinema can be. The kind of *métissage* that Perrault and Quinn embody is both formal (documentary and fictional elements mix freely) and cultural (they both deal with ways that traditional ways of life, and traditional notions of cultural identity, are mixing with modernity, altering both the ways of life and notions of what modernity constitutes). Their films not exactly consistent with many contemporary visions of what multiculturalism should be concerned with, but that does not mean that they are not clear examples of hybrid film making.

Glissant's concept of *Le Divers*, then, with its focus on specificity and mixture, its rejection of both universal transcendence and nationalist provincialism, intersects nicely with what Quinn and Perrault are wrestling with in their work. All three intellectuals are showing us that small islands, despite their apparent isolation and the tendency toward essentialism that often defines the mainstream understanding of these areas (Glissant's ideas fly directly in the face of concepts such as *négritude,* in much the same way that *Atlantean* is an explicit rejoinder to a romantic "Celtictude" or *Le Règne du jour* and *Un pays sans bon sens!* reject a *pure laine* approach to French identity), can actually be the starting place for a complex, insurgent re-definition of the relationship between the local and the global.

Following Glissant's ideas about *créolisation*, then, it seems clear that a traditional concept of authenticity is no longer tenable (if it ever was) the failure of this authenticity has been the central subject of a lot of recent film making that falls under the rubric of "hybird cinema," or what Laura U. Marks calls "intercultural cinema." Marks hits the Perrault/Quinn nail right on the head when she writes in an article on Deleuze and hybrid cinema that

> Cinematic archeology is not a question of exhuming the "authentic voice" of a minority people – for that would be a unitary voice and, in fact, it would simply replicate the transparent domination by which a minority artist is forced to speak in a minority voice. The minority artist, by contrast, dances along the border. He/she must undo a double colonization, since the community is colonized both by the master's stories and by its own, that have been translated and annexed by the colonizer.
> (1994:262)

Russell has a similar take on the possibilities of autoethnography, writing that "Autoethnography is a vehicle and a strategy for challenging imposed forms of identity and exploring the discursive possibilities of inauthentic subjectivities" (276). Authenticity, so important to a traditional ethic of ethnographic fieldwork, is for both Quinn and Perrault a kind of Borgesian riddle; the deeper you move into the maze that's supposed to bring you there, the further away from it you get.

V. The Things In-Between

The definition of hybrid cinema is tricky, having been, for some while now, all things to all scholars and critics. Marks offers a working definition in her book *The Skin of the Film*, although the enormous number of films she covers in that book should give a good sense that the term is pretty broad. At any rate, drawing on Homi Bhabha, she writes that

> Cultural hybridity, like the metaphor of genetic mutation from which it draws, is necessarily unpredictable and un-categorise-able. The hybrid reveals the process of exclusion by which nations and fixed cultural identities are formed, forcing the dominant culture to explain itself... The

> term "hybrid cinema" also implies a hybrid form, mixing documentary, fiction, personal and experimental genres, as well as different media. (2000: 7-8)

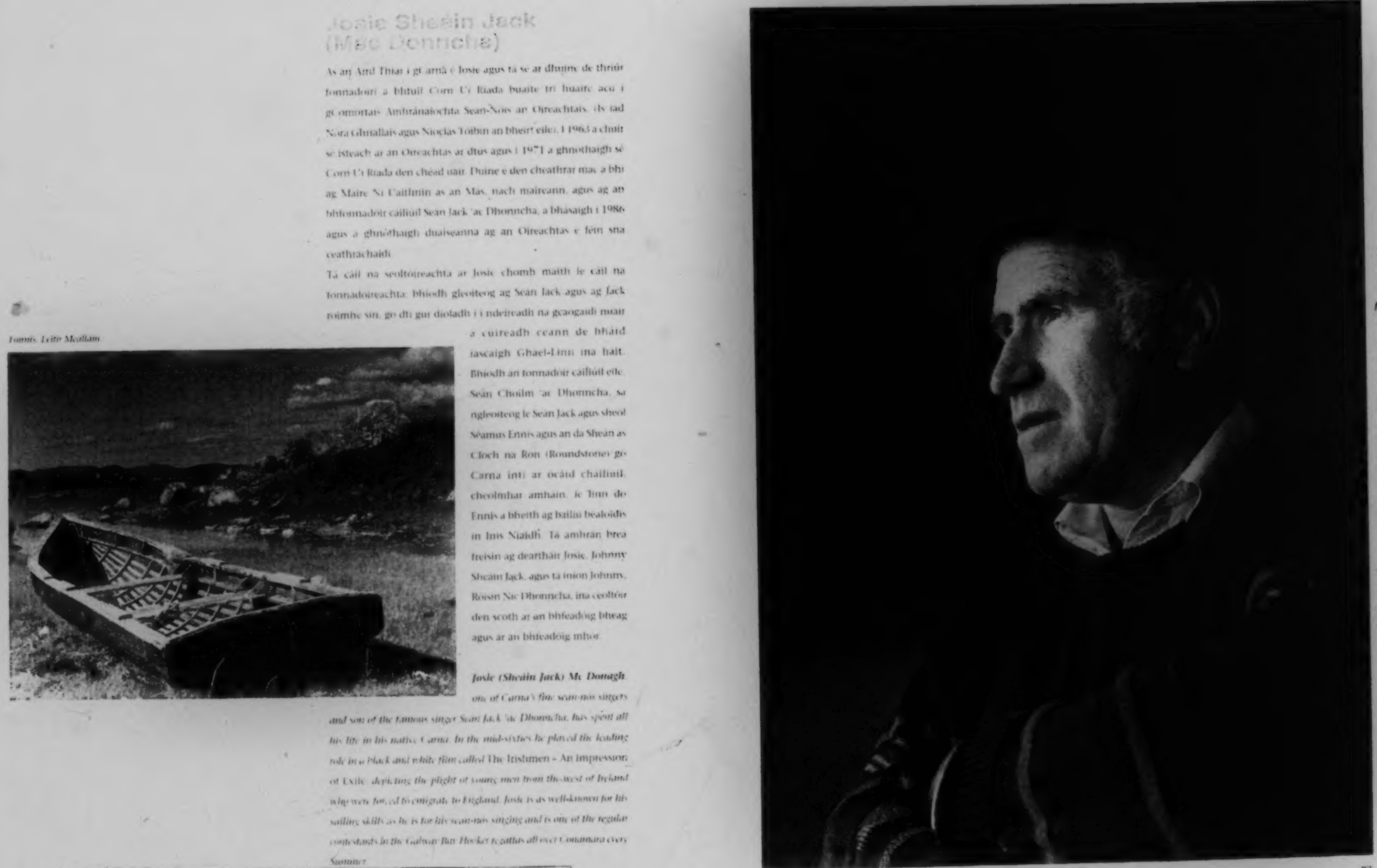
Quinn and Perrault, as a result of their need to explain remote experiences and to bring those experiences into an international context, have adopted just this kind of hybrid form. We have already seen how they mix fiction and documentary: I want now to complete this portrait of Perrault and Quinn as hybrid filmmakers *avant la lettre* by explaining the ways that they have revealed the process of exclusion by which nations and fixed cultural identities are formed. For this I will discuss two films that they have made about their diasporas of their respective nations, *L'Acadie, L'Acadie?!?* (1971) and *Pobol i London: Flytippers* (1987). I will also discuss the way that their book projects further the cultural work they began with their films.

L'Acadie, L'Acadie!?! is the closest that Perrault ever came to making a "militant film," along the lines of what began to spring up in France, the UK and Latin American in the 1960s and 70s. The opening titles and segment dividers are made up of newspaper clippings, a device reminiscent of mid-period Godard. Perrault moves us right into the strife that was, in 1968, gripping the recently established Université de Moncton in New Brunswick. Students were agitating for greater linguistic consideration, not so much from the Université, which they decry as being criminally underfunded, especially in comparison to the English-speaking University of New Brunswick, but mostly from Moncton as a whole. The film is filled with confrontations with bastions of the Anglophone establishment, filmed in a very cool, classically *direct* style. A sequence where students address the City Council and are cowed by the Mayor, breathtakingly patronising, almost looks like a parody of the *direct* form. All we see throughout the entire fairly dramatic sequence is the students' backs; the camera hardly moves. The sequence at a meeting of the local chapter of the Empire Loyalist Society feels much more militant; the students shut the meeting down and Perrault and Brault capture the confrontation with the kind of unstable, mobile camera work that reminds the viewer why *cinéma direct* was one of the preferred modes of 1960s agitational filmmakers. Other parts of the film are much more calm, feeling closer to the *cinéma de la parole* that we usually associate with Perrault. This is especially true of a sequence where the students sit around and talk about how hard it is for Francophones in New Brunswick; they speak of Québec as though it was some sort of promised land, where they can fully be themselves, if they can only manage to move there. This is the moment in the film where it becomes clear that these students think of themselves as a kind of Québec diaspora, excluded from the mainstream and gripped with feelings of nostalgia for a nearby nation of which they have little lived experience (this is of course not true of the two students who are from Québec originally). While not as brooding or obsessive about the nature of home and exile as are most of the films that Marks discusses as "hybrid cinema," *L'Acadie, L'Acadie?!?* shares a great deal with this kind of work through its disjuncture of style and content and its concern with the ways that exile is written out of national experiences. The juxtaposition of the near-fisticuffs at the Loyalist Society with the freewheeling conversation about Québec and cultural self-realisation makes it clear how central, and yet how invisible, French speakers were and remain in English Canada.

The diaspora that Bob Quinn is evokes in *Pobal í London / Flytippers* is not as politicised as that of *L'Acadie, L'Acadie?!?*, and he makes much less of its role in the British national mosaic. Nonetheless, the Connemara men he evokes, who make their living working on construction sites and illegally dumping construction waste on vacant lots, occupy a similarly embattled, visible and yet invisible place in this nation, exiled by the economic underdevelopment of the Gaeltacht. While it may be just for the benefit of the camera, they all seem to speak Irish at home; indeed, there are very few moments in the film where they speak English. As in the other installments of his *Pobol* series (*Pobol í mBoston* [1989] and *Pobal í nDeutschland* [1991]), Quinn evokes a portable but culturally intact vision of Connemara.[7] A sequence in which two very stuffy English administrators talk about the threat to public safety posed by illegal dumping is striking because of the air of mystery that they give to the perpetrators of the crime; they truly know nothing about them. These men are like little termites, slowly and invisibly eating away at British law and order, and even the unchallenged place of the English language, from small flats in working-class London. I do not wish to ascribe more political value to the illegal dumping of dirt than it really deserves; what I am struck by in this film, though, is Quinn's discovery, and his extremely close inspection, of a small, self-contained community that still speaks a language that, during the 19th century, the government of the country they now live in tried very hard to wipe out. As illustrated by Quinn, the community serves as a microcosm of the post-colonial diaspora in the late 1980s, and of the Gaeltatcht itself (their community comes to feel like a little island on the fringe of London, just as they originally come from a little island on the fringe of Ireland).

Just as Quinn has not confined himself to the physical borders of Ireland in his evocation of the Gaeltacht, neither has he been confined by the medium of cinema. In addition to writing several books,[8] he has had a modest career as a still photographer, and recently published the book of portrait photographs *Conamara: An Tír Aineoil*, with text by folklorist Liam Mac Con Iomaire. This work is an expansion of the project on which Quinn spent his entire career, the documentation of life in Connemara at the end of the 20th century.

There is quite a complex, collage-like relationship between the English text, the Irish text, and the images. A portrait of *sean-nós* singer Josie Mac Donncha (26-27), for example, ***(Figure 1)*** features a smaller photograph of a boat inset on the text. His biography in Irish tells us that "Tá cáil na seoltóireachta ar Josie chomh maith le cáil na fonnadóireachta; bhíodh gleoiteog ag Seán Jeack agus ag Jack riomhe sin..." (27) [Josie is as well known for sailing as for singing; Old Jack had a *gleoiteog*, a small sailboat, and Jack had one too...], linking not only sailing with music but *sean-nós* with the *gleoiteog*, two distinct parts of Connemara culture, both of which have aesthetic as well as practical value (his being well known for both is in the English biography too; the bit about the *gleoiteog* isn't). The Irish biography also tells us that "Tá amhrán bréa freisin ag dearthair Josie, Johnnie Sheáin Jack, agus tá iníon Johnny, Róisín Nic Dhonncha,



Josie Sheáin Jack (Mac Donncha)

As an Ard Thiar i gCarna é Josie agus tá sé ar dhuine de thriúr fonnadóirí a bhfuil Corn Uí Riada buaite trí huaire acu i gcomórtais Amhránaíochta Sean-Nós an Oireachtais. (Is iad Nóra Ghrualláis agus Nioclás Tóibín an bheirt eile). I 1963 a chuir sé isteach ar an Oireachtas ar dtús agus i 1971 a ghnóthaigh sé Corn Uí Riada den chéad uair. Duine é den cheathrar mac a bhí ag Máire Ní Chaithnín as an Más, nach maireann, agus ag an bhfonnadóir cáiliúil Seán Jack 'ac Dhonncha, a bhásaigh i 1986 agus a ghnóthaigh duaiseanna ag an Oireachtas é féin sna ceathrachaidí.

Tá cáil na seoltóireachta ar Josie chomh maith le cáil na fonnadóireachta: bhíodh gleoiteog ag Seán Jack agus ag Jack roimhe sin, go dtí gur díoladh í i ndeireadh na gcaogaidí nuair a cuireadh ceann de bháid iascaigh Ghael-Linn ina háit. Bhíodh an fonnadóir cáiliúil eile, Seán Choilm 'ac Dhonncha, sa ngleoiteog le Seán Jack agus sheol Séamus Ennis agus an dá Sheán as Cloch na Rón (Roundstone) go Carna inti ar ócáid cháiliúil, cheolmhar amháin, le linn do Ennis a bheith ag bailiú béaloidis in Inis Niaidh. Tá amhrán breá freisin ag deartháir Josie, Johnny Sheáin Jack, agus tá iníon Johnny, Róisín Nic Dhonncha, ina ceoltóir den scoth ar an bhfeadóg bheag agus ar an bhfeadóg mhór.

Fínis, Leitir Mealláin

***Josie (Sheáin Jack) Mc Donagh**, one of Carna's fine sean-nós singers and son of the famous singer Seán Jack 'ac Dhonncha, has spent all his life in his native Carna. In the mid-sixties he played the leading role in a black and white film called* The Irishmen – An Impression of Exile, *depicting the plight of young men from the west of Ireland who were forced to emigrate to England. Josie is as well-known for his sailing skills as he is for his sean-nós singing and is one of the regular contestants in the Galway Bay Hooker regattas all over Conamara every Summer.*

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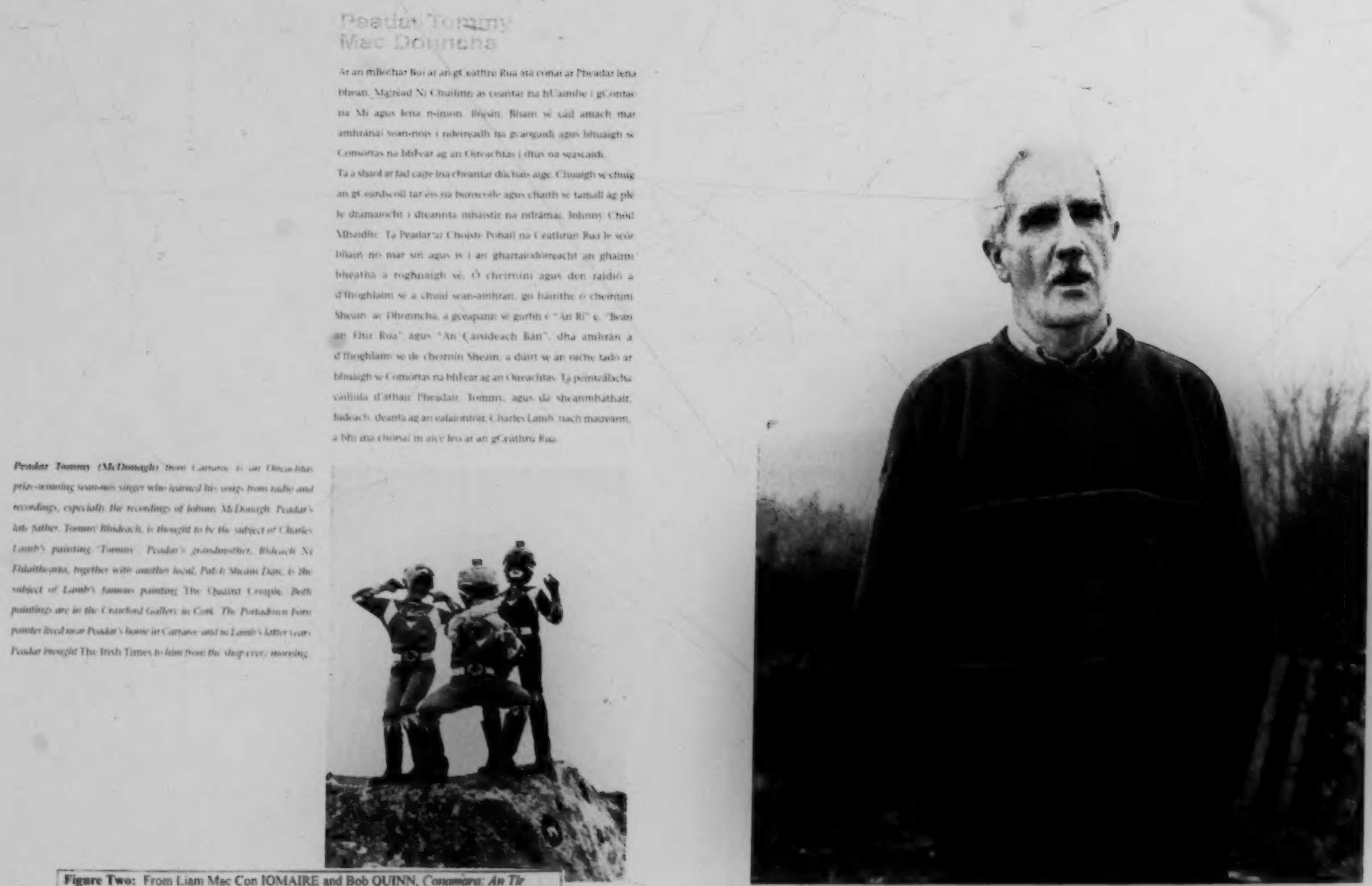
Figure One: From Liam Mac Con IOMAIRE and Bob QUINN, *Conamara: An Tír Aineoil* (Indreabhán: Cló Iar-Chonnachta, 1997), pp. 26-27 ina ceoltóir den scoth ar an bhfeadóih bheag agus ar an bhfeadóig mhór" (27) [Josie's brother Johnnie Sheáin Jack has a beautiful voice too, and Johnny's daughter, Róisín Nic Dhonncha, is a great musician on the small and big tin whistles], making it clear that traditional music, like the teaching of sailing, is an inter-generational matter. None of this is in the much shorter English biography, although that text mentions Josie's role in a film about Connemara men emigrating to England that is missing from the Irish text (the English text also briefly mentions his interest in sailing – no details, though). No knowledge of Irish or English is necessary to be affected by the visually striking image of Josie: his arms are crossed, he looks thoughtfully into the distance, and there is quite a subtle play of blacks and greys. But the imagery is not quite enough for Quinn; comprehension of the written text brings a keener understanding of the way that the culture of seafaring, music, and tight families remain wound together in contemporary Connemara.

Indeed, while the book would seem to have some value for those in search of romantic images of pre-modern Ireland, Quinn quite deftly juggles modernity and cultural distinctiveness. A portrait of *sean-nós* singer Peadar Tommy Mac Donncha ***(figure 2)*** sits opposite an image of little kids on a mossy rock, dressed up as Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers (there's nothing in the English or the Irish text to clarify that). A portrait of storyteller Tom Ó Flatharta ***(figure 3)***, whose Irish and English text makes mention of involvement with Raidió na Gaeltachta, sits opposite a photo set into the text of Máirtín Jamesie, wearing earphones and before a microphone, presumably reading the day's news. Latter day



Peadar Tommy Mac Donncha

Ar an mBóthar Buí ar an gCeathrú Rua atá cónaí ar Pheadar lena bhean, Mairéad Ní Chualáin as ceantar na hUamhe i gContae na Mí agus lena n-iníon, Róisín. Bhain sé cáil amach mar amhránaí sean-nóis i ndeireadh na gcaogaidí agus bhuaigh sé Comórtas na bhFear ag an Oireachtas i dtús na seascaidí.

Tá a shaol ar fad caite ina cheantar dúchais aige. Chuaigh sé chuig an gCeardscoil tar éis na bunscoile agus chaith sé tamall ag plé le drámaíocht i dteannta mháistir na ndrámaí, Johnny Choil Mhaidhc. Tá Peadar ar Choiste Pobail na Ceathrún Rua le scór bliain nó mar sin agus is í an gharraíodóireacht an ghairm bheatha a roghnaigh sé. Ó cheirníní agus den raidió a d'fhoghlaim sé a chuid sean-amhrán, go háirithe ó cheirníní Sheáin ac Dhonncha, a gceapann sé gurbh é "An Rí" é. "Bean an Fhir Rua" agus "An Caisideach Bán", dhá amhrán a d'fhoghlaim sé de cheirnín Sheáin, a dúirt sé an oíche tadó ar bhuaigh sé Comórtas na bhFear ag an Oireachtas. Tá peintéálacha cáiliúla d'athair Pheadair, Tommy, agus dá sheanmháthair, Bideach, déanta ag an ealaíontóir Charles Lamb nach maireann, a bhí ina chónaí in aice leo ar an gCeathrú Rua.

Peadar Tommy (McDonagh) *from Carraroe is an Oireachtas prize-winning sean-nós singer who learned his songs from radio and recordings, especially the recordings of Johnny McDonagh. Peadar's late father, Tommy Bhideach, is thought to be the subject of Charles Lamb's painting 'Tommy'. Peadar's grandmother, Bideach Ní Fhlaithearta, together with another local, Patch Sheain Dan, is the subject of Lamb's famous painting* The Quaint Couple. *Both paintings are in the Crawford Gallery in Cork. The Portadown born painter lived near Peadar's house in Carraroe and in Lamb's latter years Peadar brought* The Irish Times *to him from the shop every morning.*

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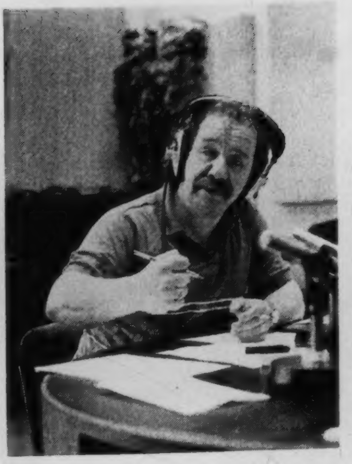
Figure Two: From Liam Mac Con IOMAIRE and Bob QUINN, *Conamara: An Tír Aineoil* (Indreabhán: Cló Iar-Chonnachta, 1997), pp. 132-33

Tom Bheairtle Tom Ó Flatharta

Ar an Lochán Beag in Indreabhán atá cónaí ar an scéalaí cáiliúil Tom Bheairtle Tom. Scéalaí mór a bhí ina athair roimhe agus an scéal a chloiseadh Tom anocht bhíodh sé in ann é a insint amárach. Tigh Chóil Choilm agus i dtithe cuartaíochta eile timpeall air a thosaigh sé ag insint scéalta é féin nuair a bhí sé a cúig déag nó a sé déag de bhlianta.

Tógadh an oiread scéalta óna athair, gan luach saothair ar bith a thabhairt dó ar a son, gur gheall Tom go ligfeadh sé na scéalta as cuimhne sula dtarlódh an rud céanna dó féin. Is mór is fiú gur chuir daoine mar Phádraig Ó hÉalaí, Maidhc P. Ó Conghaile agus Tom Phaddy Mac Diarmada ina luí air a intinn a athrú agus thosaigh sé arís ag insint scéalta do mhic léinn in Ollscoil na Gaillimhe agus ar an gclár *Trian le Scéalaíocht* ar Raidió na Gaeltachta. Tá duaiseanna gnóite ag an Oireachtas aige agus tá roinnt dá chuid scéalta curtha ar chaiséad ag Cló Iar-Chonnachta (CIC L18).

Tá suim mhór sna sean-amhráin ag Tom freisin agus bhí amhrán breá ag a mháthair, Máire Ní Chonghaile – bean de mhuintir Dhubháin aniar as an Trá Bháin, arbh as Árainn a hathair agus ar aistrigh a muintir go hÁrainn tar éis do Mháire pósadh. Is as an gCnoc, Na hAille, bean Tom, Eibhlín agus tá beirt mhac agus triúr iníon acu.



Máirtín Jameson, Raidió na Gaeltachta

***Tom Bheairtle Tom Ó Flaitheartu (O'Flaherty)**, well-known storyteller from An Lochán Beag, Inverin, has been a contributor to Raidió na Gaeltachta's storytelling series* Trian le Scéalaíocht. *He has won prizes at the Oireachtas and some of his stories are available on cassette from Cló Iar-Chonnachta (CIC L18). His father, Beairtle Tom, was also a famous storyteller and his mother, who was from An Trá Bháin, was a very fine traditional singer. Tom and his wife, Eibhlín, have three daughters and two sons.*

Figure Three: From Liam Mac Con IOMAIRE and Bob QUINN, *Conamara: An Tír Aineoil* (Indreabhán: Cló Iar-Chonnachta, 1997), pp. 38-39.

antiquarians, then, should take no comfort from *Conamara: An Tír Aineoil*; like *Poitín* or *The Bishop's Story*, it creates a portrait of a distinct culture that is both unassimilated *and* wrestling with modernity.

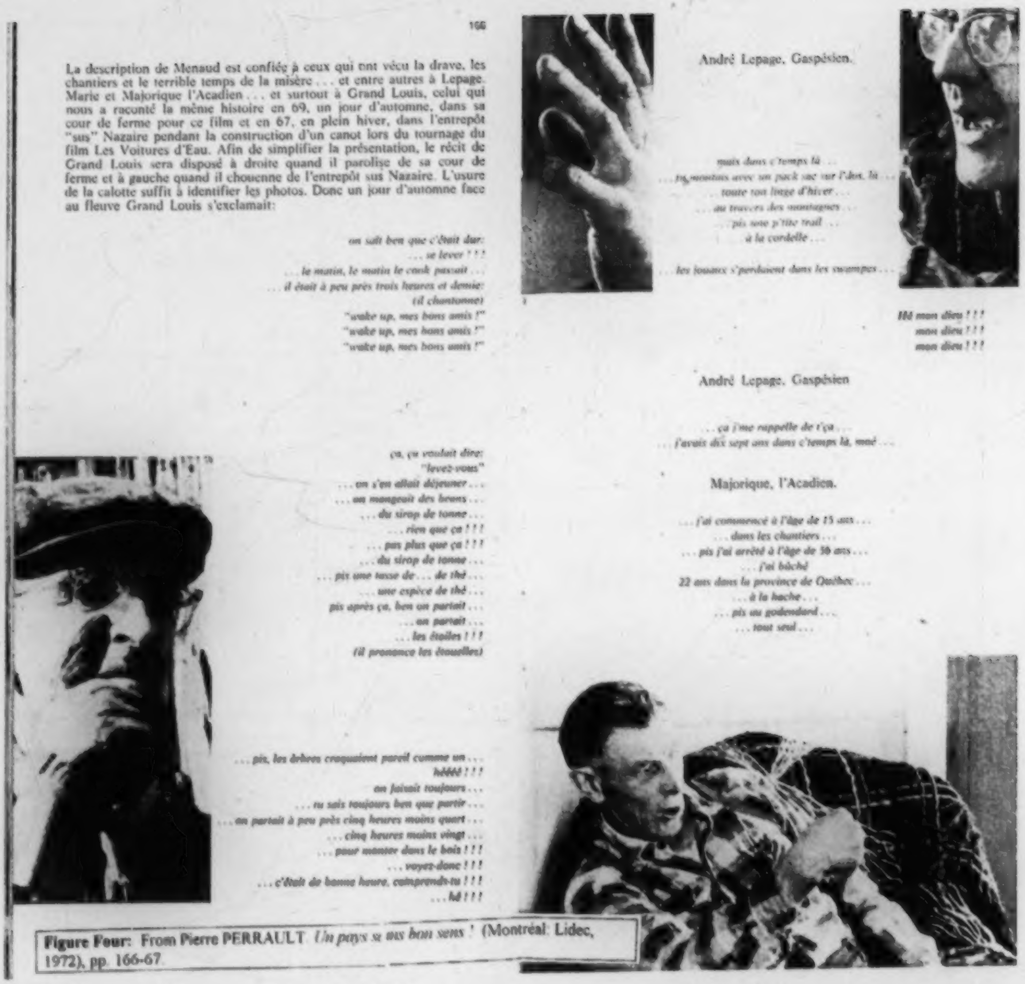
Perrault has also published a number of books that mix photographic images and text, although these works are much more closely related to the film texts themselves than *Conamara: An Tír Aineoil*. Although this work does not discuss Perrault's voluminous writings (he is an extremely prolific poet and essayist, and in 1999 became the first person to be posthumously awarded a Governor-General's award, Canada's highest literary honour, for his arctic travelogue *Le mal du nord*), I do want to deal here with the published screenplays of Perrault's films. The case of the published screenplay of *Un pays sans bon sens* is especially interesting. David Clandfield, who is enamoured of the possibility that Perrault's use of the *cinéma de la parole* and *cinéma direct* can be a means by which people traditionally silenced can speak for themselves without the moderation of domineering elites (a possibility that, as I will discuss, the does not feel is really fulfilled), writes of this document that:

> ...*cinéma direct* can offer an untrammelled engagement with traces of social reality only to the extent that the author has lost control of its rhetorical envelope. At best publishing such a transcript is an effort to reclaim that which was lost. At worst it may aim to snatch back that which was accepted by the critical viewer and incorporated into systems of belief and knowledge that are alien to the original controlling subject. The complex processes of reception and critical interpretation are given a reduced role to play. The distant elite strikes again.
> (24)

Clandfield's reading of this published screenplay as an attempt to rein in interpretations of what is by nature an open form is exactly the opposite of what is going on in *Conamara: An Tir Aineoil*, which is a free play between languages to create a complex, incomplete, sometimes unexplained portrait of a hybridised culture. Overall, though, I think Clandfield is being too hard on Perrault; the published screenplay of *Un pays sans bon sens* is actually quite a contradictory work. The section where we are introduced to the Franco-Albertan (and now Parisian) Maurice is an especially interesting part of the book. At one point the text reads:

> C'est la France qui reçoit les étudiants québécois, c'est-à-dire ceux qui seront "plus avancés." C'est la France "légère et courte-vêtue" qu'Alexis Tremblay a refusé de voir (cf. *Le règne du jour*) au profit de la France éternelle, idéale, de l'imaginaire. Car il existe une image émouvante et naïve de cette France lointaine et une peu passée dans l'album des Québécois qui ne viendront jamais en France: sorte de terre promise. (115)
>
> [It's the France that receives the more advanced Québec students. It's "scantily clad" France that Alexis Tremblay refused to see (cf. *Le règne du jour*), to the benefit of the ideal, eternal France, the France of the imagination. For there is a moving and naive image of this distant France, and a little of it makes its way into the album of Québécois who will never go to France; a sort of promised land.]

It may seem clear at this point what Clandfield was objecting to. This is a very clear explanation of what Perrault thinks is wrong both with his characters and the Québec view of France generally; it's not exactly an invitation to further interpretation. But I'm struck by sequences in the book like pages 166-175 ***(an example of this is figure 4)***, where there are mostly close-ups, arranged in a way that give the sense of fragmentation and montage, and which reproduce the speech of some of Perrault's subjects without comment, in a way that makes them seem like a very open form of poetry. Indeed, this aesthetic is replicated on page 114-



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La description de Menaud est confiée à ceux qui ont vécu la drave, les chantiers et le terrible temps de la misère . . . et entre autres à Lepage. Marie et Majorique l'Acadien . . . et surtout à Grand Louis, celui qui nous a raconté la même histoire en 69, un jour d'automne, dans sa cour de ferme pour ce film et en 67, en plein hiver, dans l'entrepôt "sus" Nazaire pendant la construction d'un canot lors du tournage du film Les Voitures d'Eau. Afin de simplifier la présentation, le récit de Grand Louis sera disposé à droite quand il parolise de sa cour de ferme et à gauche quand il chouenne de l'entrepôt sus Nazaire. L'usure de la calotte suffit à identifier les photos. Donc un jour d'automne face au fleuve Grand Louis s'exclamait:

on sait ben que c'était dur:
. . . se lever ! ! !
. . . le matin, le matin le cook passait . . .
. . . il était à peu près trois heures et demie:
(il chantonne)
"wake up, mes bons amis !"
"wake up, mes bons amis !"
"wake up, mes bons amis !"

André Lepage, Gaspésien.

mais dans c'temps là . . .
. . . tu montais avec un pack sac sur l'dos, là . . .
. . . toute ton linge d'hiver . . .
. . . au travers des montagnes . . .
. . . pis une p'tite trail . . .
. . . à la cordelle . . .

. . . les jouaux s'perdaient dans les swampes . . .

Hé mon dieu ! ! !
mon dieu ! ! !
mon dieu ! ! !

André Lepage, Gaspésien

. . . ça j'me rappelle de t'ça . . .
. . . j'avais dix sept ans dans c'temps là, moé . . .

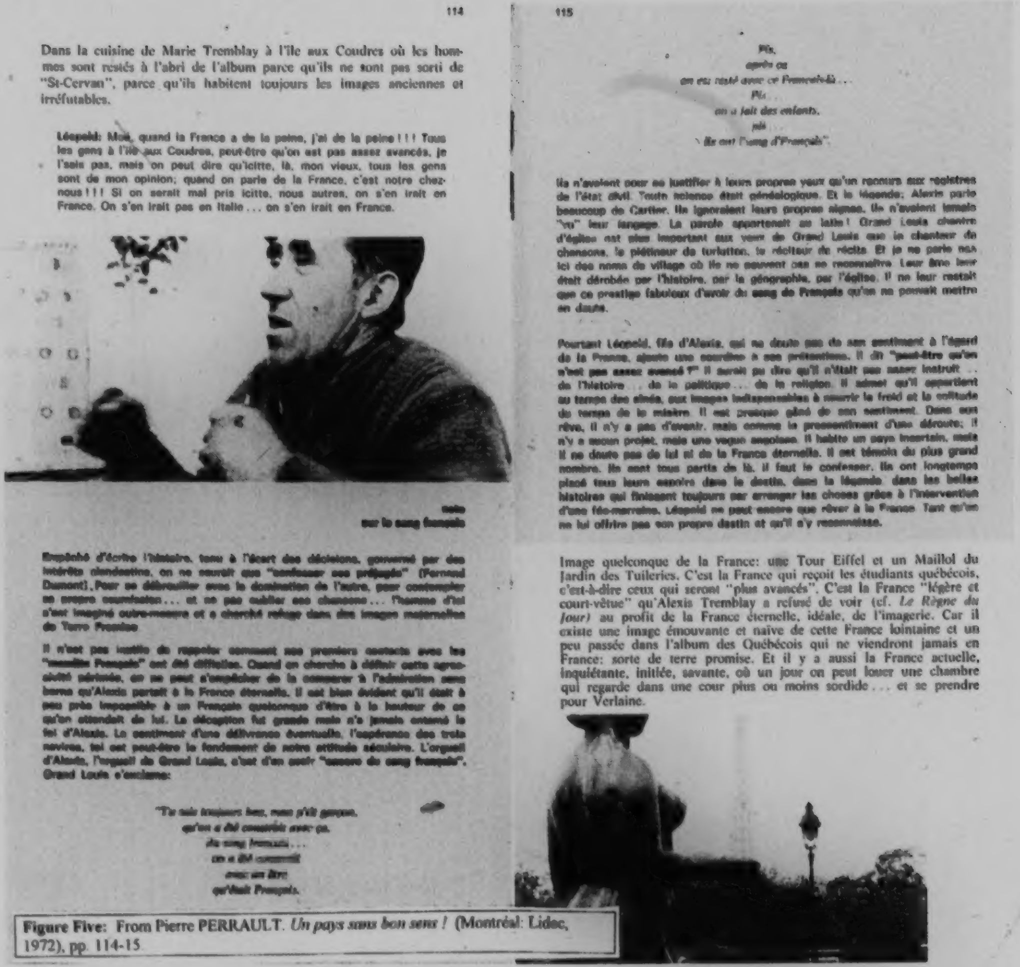
Majorique, l'Acadien.

. . . j'ai commencé à l'âge de 15 ans . . .
. . . dans les chantiers . . .
. . . pis j'ai arrêté à l'âge de 50 ans . . .
. . . j'ai bûché
22 ans dans la province de Québec . . .
. . . à la hache . . .
. . . pis au godendard . . .
. . . tout seul . . .

ça, ça voulait dire:
"levez-vous"
. . . on s'en allait déjeuner . . .
. . . on mangeait des beans . . .
. . . du sirop de tonne . . .
. . . rien que ça ! ! !
. . . pas plus que ça ! ! !
. . . du sirop de tonne . . .
. . . pis une tasse de . . . de thé . . .
. . . une espèce de thé . . .
pis après ça, ben on partait . . .
. . . on partait . . .
. . . les étoiles ! ! !
(il prononce les étoualles)

. . . pis, les ârbres craquaient pareil comme un . . .
hééééé ! ! !
on faisait toujours . . .
. . . tu sais toujours ben que partir . . .
. . . on partait à peu près cinq heures moins quart . . .
. . . cinq heures moins vingt . . .
. . . pour monter dans le bois ! ! !
. . . voyez-donc ! ! !
. . . c'était de bonne heure, comprends-tu ! ! !
. . . hé ! ! !

Figure Four: From Pierre PERRAULT *Un pays sans bon sens !* (Montréal: Lidec, 1972), pp. 166-67.



114

Dans la cuisine de Marie Tremblay à l'île aux Coudres où les hommes sont restés à l'abri de l'album parce qu'ils ne sont pas sorti de "St-Cervan", parce qu'ils habitent toujours les images anciennes et irréfutables.

Léopold: Moé, quand la France a de la peine, j'ai de la peine ! ! ! Tous les gens à l'île-aux Coudres, peut-être qu'on est pas assez avancés, je l'sais pas, mais on peut dire qu'icitte, là, mon vieux, tous les gens sont de mon opinion; quand on parle de la France, c'est notre chez-nous ! ! ! Si on serait mal pris icitte, nous autres, on s'en irait en France. On s'en irait pas en Italie . . . on s'en irait en France.

115

Image quelconque de la France: une Tour Eiffel et un Maillol du Jardin des Tuileries. C'est la France qui reçoit les étudiants québécois, c'est-à-dire ceux qui seront "plus avancés". C'est la France "légère et court-vêtue" qu'Alexis Tremblay a refusé de voir (cf. *Le Règne du Jour)* au profit de la France éternelle, idéale, de l'imagerie. Car il existe une image émouvante et naïve de cette France lointaine et un peu passée dans l'album des Québécois qui ne viendront jamais en France: sorte de terre promise. Et il y a aussi la France actuelle, inquiétante, initiée, savante, où un jour on peut louer une chambre qui regarde dans une cour plus ou moins sordide . . . et se prendre pour Verlaine.

Figure Five: From Pierre PERRAULT. *Un pays sans bon sens !* (Montréal: Lidec, 1972), pp. 114-15

115, which is opposite and above the passage where Perrault grumbles about France being the promised land ***(figure 5).*** Here, Grand-Louis' speech is reproduced in a way that emphasises its poetic context: it is laid out on the page in short lines and centred, and so looks like a poem.

I would argue, then, that in much the same way that *Conamara: An Tir Aineoil* juxtaposes image and written language in a very open way, the published screenplay of *Un pays sans bon sens!* moves between dialogical and monological imperatives, never letting its reader figure out whether matters are being further explained or further complicated. This little book is the perfect counterpart to Perrault's cinematic practice. France, Québec, poetry, prose, explanation, documentation, argumentation, film, words, and still photography are all flying around, montage-like, as though they were freely interchangeable. Perrault knows, as does Bob Quinn, that a representation of highly complex, shifting cultures, demands an approach that is deeply hybridised.

VI. Conclusion

What most immediately links Bob Quinn and Pierre Perrault is their common interest in islands and language: both of these filmmakers are concerned with, above all else, explaining cultures that are too little understood by the nations to which they belong. But scratch just a little deeper and the similarities between these filmmakers become almost uncanny: both are annoyed by the boundaries between fiction and documentary, seeing them as arbitrary and ignoring them whenever they can. Both are nationalists, but both of them are also passionately interested in the international aspects of their national myths, and in the places where these myths simply break down altogether. Both of them have attacked the project of building a nationalist, formally hybridised cinema by going beyond both the borders of their nations (France, Africa) and the borders of cinema itself. For those who seek a fully realised, radical response to the domination of a globalised classical realist form and its political, cultural and formal hegemony, the films of Bob Quinn and Pierre Perrault, like the films of Jean Rouch, are an essential starting place.

Notes:

1. Brault has told me that for the most part, it was he who directed *Pour la suite du monde*, which was Perrault's first experience with cinema, except for a three-part TV series called *Au pays du Neufve-France* (1959) for which Perrault had written the text. Brault also told me that it was Perrault who knew the islanders (*Au pays du Neufve-France* had been about Île-aux-Coudres), and who was responsible for setting up the contacts with them and generally getting the film underway, an important aspect of the film indeed, especially given its connection to Robert Flaherty's cinematic practice. This division of labour actually seems quite natural; Brault also said that he was more interested in images, while Perrault was more interested in *la parole*. Brault further explained that this was a fairly unique case in Perrault's career, and not the case at all with his other films, including the other films they made together, such as *L'Acadie, l'Acadie?!?* I acknowledge, then, that considering *Pour la suite du monde* to be a "Perrault film," while not entirely inaccurate, is something of an auteurist cheat.

2. Poitín, also known as poteen, is an illegal and incredibly strong liquor, brewed from potatoes. It is the cultural and alcoholic equivalent of moonshine.

3. *Cinéma vérité* generally refers to a style of documentary film making where the filmmaker seems to be absent, there is no voice over, and there is an emphasis on spontaneity and "life caught unawares." Jean Rouch, whose influence I will later discuss in more detail, is generally credited with coining the term "cinéma verité," which is itself derived from Soviet filmmaker Dziga Vertov's weekly newsreel series *Kino-Pravda*, produced in the late 20s and early 30s and focussing on everyday life, especially that of workers, in the Soviet Union. *Vérité* is generally thought of as being less manipulated, more "candid" than *direct*. However, historians of documentary have widely varying definitions of *verité* and *direct*, and I agree with William Rothman's position, who writes that "I find the distinction between 'cinema vérité' and 'direct cinema' prejudicial and unhelpful" (x). In clarifying these terms in the context of Jean Rouch's films, he could,

as we shall see, easily be writing about Perrault or Quinn: "[t]he distinction between 'cinéma vérité' – a cinematic practice in which the camera engages in provocation – and 'direct cinema' – a cinematic practice in which the camera refrains from being provocative – is rendered moot by the fact that it is the very presence of the camera, when it is doing its mysterious work, that constitutes the kind of "provocation" that most interests Rouch.... In Rouch's practice, as surely as in [direct filmmakers] Leacock's or Pennebaker's, observation is the camera's way of provoking its subject to manifest profound sides of themselves, the camera's way of participating" (87-88).

4. In both films, though, children are often used to shore up a subtext of cultural collapse; Peter Harcourt seem to be on to this when, discussing a sequence where little boys play on huge tyres and Grand-Louis comes in to tell them to cut it out and let him show them how to carve a little boat (one of the few sequences in the film that features any young people), that:

> As with so many moments in the film, this sequence is a loving celebration of the day-to-day details of these people's lives; yet by innuendo, it also seems to recognise the recurring contradictions that exist within this vanishing world. On the one hand there is a beautiful sense, at least for the old, of a reverence for life, of an acceptance of its mysteries, while on the other there is an equally strong sense that the young people (like the sheep?) do not understand. [Harcourt earlier argues that in this film children are photographed in the same way as animals]
> (1984:129)

5. Until very recently, *Pour la suite du monde* did not exist in an English subtitled version. In December 2000 the National Film Board finally created and released on video such a version, entitled *Of Men, Whales and the Moon*. Until then, the film had been circulated in an "English-language" version called *The Moontrap,* which was some 30 minutes shorter, and instead of subtitles had a voice-over that both translated some of the dialogue and provided a narration. These elements completely destroyed some of the most important aspects of the *cinéma direct* aesthetic for which Perrault was so famous.

6. René Levesque was one of the founders of the separatist Parti Québécois, which emerged in 1968 as the result of a merger by several separatist organisations. They held the provincial government from 1976-1985, with Levesque serving as Première Ministre (Premier) for almost that entire time (he was forced to resign in 1985, right before an election was called where the Liberals were re-elected). With Levesque at its head, the PQ sponsored a referendum on sovereignty for Québec in 1980 (which it lost 60-40) and nearly de-railed the negotiations to patriate Canada's constitution from the United Kingdom in 1982 (the constitution was successfully patriated by then Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, although it has never been recognised by Québec). Levesque died shortly after he left politics.

7. Each of the *Pobal* series, produced for RTÉ, has several installments – *Pobal í London* has 5 episodes (*Taxi, South and O'Hanlon's, Busking, Union Tavern, Fly Tippers*), *Pobol í mBoston* has 6 episodes (*Mary, Illegal, Clann, The Archivist, Scoil Sailearna, Transplanted*) and *Pobol í nDeutschland* has five episodes (*Morris Minor, Mná na hÉireann, Gael Force 8, Celts in Bonn, Ceol í nDeutschland*). See Patsy Murphy's "Fiche bliain ag fis" (program notes for the Galway Film Fleadh's 1992 Bob Quinn retrospective).

8. In addition to the companion book to *Atlantean*, in the late 80s Quinn was commissioned to write the biography of Muammar al Qadhafi. According to Quinn, the offer of the commission had something to do with his apparent interest in Islam, which an official at the Libyan embassy in Ireland had gleaned from watching *Atlantean* on television. Quinn was flown out to Lybia to meet with the Colonel, although the project eventually collapsed. But that's all another story...

Chapter Three:
Jacques Godbout, John T. Davis and the Essay Film

The last chapter discussed the way that two filmmakers dealt with islands and the international implications of their culture; they were, in some ways, using the geographical extremes of their nation-states in order to say something about the often problematic way their local nationalism have evolved. And both Bob Quinn and Pierre Perrault were using the form by which "peoples" or national belonging has often been manufactured, the discourse of ethnography. We see something very similar in the films of Jacques Godbout and John T. Davis, work that seeks to broaden conceptions of Irish and Québec culture using not tiny islands but entire continents, and which do so using a searching, essayistic form that flies in the face of the discourse of the objective historical film.

For both filmmakers, this has entailed a sustained engagement with the culture of the United States, and while both filmmakers have a very large, diverse body of work, this engagement will be the focus of this chapter. The culture of the United States is dealt with most explicitly in Godbout's *Alias Will James* (1988) and Davis' *Route 66* (1985), two films that are both centrally concerned with the enormity of the American continent. But both Godbout and Davis have also made shorter work that is more interested in specific instances of the way that the United States has interacted with their cultures; these include films like Davis' *Power in the Blood* and to a lesser extent *Dust on the Bible* (both 1989), and Godbout's *Un monologue Nord-Sud* or *Comme en Californie* (both 1983). And both filmmakers deal with these issues using a highly subjective style, one that is close to the idea of the caméra-stylo spelled out by Alexandre Astruc. The kind of subjectivity that we see in the ethno-dramas of Bob Quinn and Pierre Perrault is also present in Godbout and Davis' films; we also see social and political discussion accomplished through interpersonal drama and narrative, a mixture that as we will see in the next chapter is also present in important counter-cinematic works like *Les Ordres* and *Maeve*. This chapter continues my discussion of non-narrative, non-commercial cinema in Ireland and Québec by explaining how these two filmmakers have used a form that Perrault and Quinn are also close to, as was Denys Arcand in his earlier days (as we will see in chapter five): the cinematic essay.

This form defines Davis' entire *œuvre* and most of Godbout's. Although he is more widely known as a novelist (and as a founder of the literary review *Liberté*) , Godbout began making films in 1964, with the short fiction *Fabienne sans son Jules* (he had started at the NFB/ONF in 1959 as a translator). I will not deal with his novels here, and while it is certainly possible to place Godbout in a number of literary contexts, I will instead be arguing for his status as a caméra-stylo-esque essay filmmaker (a concept I will define shortly). Indeed, while he has also made the relatively widely-seen narratives *YUL 871* (1966), about a European coming to Québec, and *IXE-13* (1971), a spoof of a popular series of spy comics, his best-known films are his documentaries. These documentaries are almost always subjective, first-person examinations of some part of Québec's cultural and social life, and they are *all* made for the NFB/ONF. While John T. Davis has made films for a variety of production companies and television stations and acted more as an independent than Godbout has, he has stuck strictly to documentary. While he started out showing his art-school roots with three films about Punk music in Northern Ireland (*Shell Shock Rock* [1978], *Protex Hurrah* [1980] and *Self-Conscious Over You* [1981]), he slowly developed a fascination with the United States. His cycle of US films is made up of *Route 66*, *Hobo* (1991), *The Tip to the Hip: Alligator Records* (1993), all three subjective, rambling meditations on the distinctiveness of the culture of the United States, particularly the South and the Midwest. His films about Northern Ireland, *Power in the Blood* and *Dust on the Bible*, are similarly open-ended documentary meditations on a culture that is clearly important to him, whose distinctive aspects he clearly finds fascinating. Although Godbout is more clearly subjective than Davis, both filmmakers share a desire to depart from a clarity-oriented, semi-pedagogical documentary approach, searching for something that will more closely capture the ambiguities and contradictions of these cultures.

I. The Essay Film

Although Alexandre Astruc's famous 1948 essay "The Birth of A New Avant-Garde: La caméra-stylo" is very short, it still manages to contain a fair bit of polemical and high-art fluff ("It must be understood that up to now the cinema has been nothing more than a show... This idea of the cinema expressing ideas is perhaps not a new one...." [19]). Part of this is no doubt due to the fact that it was first published not in that rigorous house-organ of the French New Wave *Les Cahiers du cinéma*, but in the weekly review *L'Écran français*, where Astruc no doubt worked under fairly severe restrictions of style and length (imagine J. Hoberman publishing a manifesto for a new cinema in *Entertainment Weekly*).

But despite these limitations, the essay still has much to offer, remaining a valuable visualisation of what a subjective, non-fiction cinema could be. Particularly striking is Astruc's assertion that "the cinema will gradually break free from the tyranny of what is visual, from the image for its own sake, from the immediate and concrete demands of the narrative, to become a means of writing just as flexible and subtle as written language" (18).

These kinds of concerns can also be heard in André Bazin's essay "Pour un cinéma impur," which also deals with cinema's relationship with literature. Although his explanation relies on a "narrative=sophisticated/evolved" model of film history that scholars of early cinema such as Charles Musser or Tom Gunning[1] would take issue with, his assertion that as cinema moved forward it also became "impur" seems to me a compelling way to think about cinema as being distinct from a purely visual medium (painting, photography) or a purely narrative one. He writes that "[p]lus on avance dans l'histoire et la hiérarchie des genres, plus les différenciations s'accentuent.... La polyvalence originelle a développé ses virtualités, celles-ci sont liées désormais à des formes trop subtiles et trop complexes pour qu'on y puisse porter atteinte sans compromettre l'œuvre elle-même" (87) [The more one advances through the history and the hierarchy of genres, the more the differences are accentuated.... The original polyvalence developed its potentials, those which are there from then on in ways too subtle and too complex for them to be set aside without compromising the work itself]. That "polyvalence originale" is central for Bazin, contrary to contemporary dismissals of him as someone too romantically attached to a simple model of photographic realism to be worth taking seriously. And like Perrault's deceptive complexity and openness to *métissage*, a focus on this kind of *polyvalence* can help make it clear that Bazin's theoretical work is quite consistent with the kind of mixture and hybridity that is important to many of the films discussed in this work. Indeed, that common assessment of Bazin as overly spiritual or romantic may come from passages such as this one, which I find useful for thinking about the emergence of a non-fiction cinema because of the way that it acknowledges, and does not see as a weakness, the fundamental complexity of all media:

> De ce que sa [le cinéma] matière première est la photographie il ne s'ensuit pas que le septième art soit essentiellement voué à la dialectique des apparences et à la psychologie du comportement. S'il est vrai qu'il ne peut guère qu'appréhender son objet de l'extérieur, il a mille façons d'agir sur son apparence pour en éliminer toute équivoque et en faire le signe d'une et d'une seule réalité intérieure. En vérité, les images de l'écran sont dans leur immense majorité implicement conformes à la psychologie du théâtre ou du roman d'analyse classique. Elles supposent, avec le sens commun, une relation de causalité nécessaire et sans ambiguïté entre les sentiments et leurs manifestations ; elles postulent que tout est dans la conscience et que la conscience peut être connue.
> (90)
>
> [Since its {cinema's} primary material is photography, it doesn't follow that the seventh art is essentially given over to the dialectic between appearances and the psychology of behaviour. If it is true that it can only barely apprehend its object from the outside, then it has a thousand ways of acting on its appearance in order to eliminate all equivocating and make it the sign of one and only one interior reality. In truth, the images on the screen for the most part implicitly conform to the psychology of the theatre or of the classical analytical novel. They assume, with common sense, an unambiguous, necessary causal relation between emotions and their manifestations; they postulate that everything is in the consciousness and that consciousness can be known.]

Bazin's interest in interiority and the trickiness of representing that interiority is part of a high-modernist ideal of art that is central to the French New Wave as a whole. What we see throughout Bazin's critical corpus is not, then, a simple classicism, but an attention to contradiction and slippage that is both close to his contemporary Roland Barthes and part of the same critical-cinematic moment that informs Astruc's almost anti-visual manifesto. I argue in the introduction and in the chapter on Jean-Pierre Lefebvre that a comparison between the French New Wave and Québec's cinema of the 1960s is problematic, but the connection between Godbout and Astruc, and Godbout and Bazin (and, for that matter, Davis and Astruc and Davis and Bazin) seems to me quite close.

These positions, that cinema must be freed from the visual (Astruc) and returned to something closer to other media, even the theatre (Bazin), are quite shocking to North American eyes. After all, the goal of this continent's primary avant-garde movement, the New American Cinema,[2] was to recover the cinema as a visual art, to keep it from becoming, as Stan Brakhage once said in address to the 1988 Denver Film Festival (and has said many times before and since), "just an expansion of the medium of theatre.... You could use a record needle to hang a picture frame, but it wouldn't be a very good use of that needle." That search for a pure, visual essence so defined the North American cinematic avant garde (including Canada's) from the 1950s through the 70s and into the 80s that it can be difficult to imagine that there might have been an entirely separate approach to highly subjective, non-narrative cinema (a kind of cinema that would be more eccentric and committed than conventional documentary). The fact that Ireland has no substantial avant garde sector (as will be discussed in the next chapter) and that this New American Cinema approach never really caught on in Québec[3] makes Astruc's schema of the *caméra stylo* and Bazin's belief in a *cinéma impur* seem like a particularly organic way to approach Davis and Godbout's films.

These models are also very close to the schema for essay films proposed by Philip Lopate, a novelist and essayist who is a passionate advocate for essays (he is the editor of the anthology *The Art of the Personal Essay* and of the annual collection *Best American Essays*; as *belle-lettrist* film critics go, really as any kind of film critics go, he is unusually well-informed about non-mainstream cinema). Although he calls the essay film "a cinematic genre that barely exists" (243), he is fairly specific about what kinds of films are and aren't essays. A crucial part of his scheme is that "the text must represent an attempt to work out some reasoned line of discourse on a problem" (246), and he argues that films like Stan Brakhage's *Text of Light* (1974), Trinh T. Minh-ha's *Re-Assemblage* (1981), Ross McElwee's *Sherman's March* (1986) or Yvonne Rainer's *Privilege* (1990) are in fact not essay films, mainly because they lack a coherent argument. Although it seems to have a fairly central part in his overall schema, the requirement for a coherent line of argument is actually the third of five criteria. The others are:

> (1) An essay film must have words, in the form of a text either spoken, subtitled or intertitled. Say all you like about visualization being at the core of thinking, I cannot accept an utterly pure, silent flow of images as constituting essayistic discourse....
>
> (2) The text must represent a single voice. It may be either that of the director or screenwriter, or if collaborative, then stitched together in such as a way as to sound like a single perspective. A mere collage of quoted texts is not an essay....
>
> (4) The text must impart more than information; it must have a strong, personal point of view....
>
> (5) Finally, the text's language must be as eloquent, well written and interesting as possible....
>
> (246-48)

While I won't pay a great deal of attention to the fifth category (which Lopate admits is "Less a category than an aesthetic judgement" [248]), these other four elements are quite present in the films of both Godbout and Davis. We shall see that Davis doesn't always make use of a spoken text as such, but his films, like those of Godbout's, are focussed, semi-argumentative and subjective; although he has been placed alongside *vérité* filmmakers such as D.A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus, his films are neither rambling enough nor visually oriented enough to really fit into this category. Godbout is indeed easier to place in an essay-film context, although one critic who has done so could be describing Davis' films as well. Yvon Bellemare, whose chapter on Godbout's films has a section on his collaboration with journalist Florian Sauvageau called "Le tandem Godbout-Sauvageau: l'essai filmé," writes that "Godbout associe volontiers la réalisation de ces derniers films à des essais, au sens littéraire du terme. Il avoue, en effet, qu'en passant du film de fiction à celui de reportage il recherche la diversité que permet l'essai écrit" (151) [Godbout gladly associates the direction of his last films with essays, in the literary sense of the term. He confesses, in effect, that in leaving fiction film making for documentary film making he is looking for the diversity that the written essay permits]. Two of the films that I deal with in this chapter are made in collaboration with Sauvageau (*Comme en Californie* and *Un monologue Nord-Sud*) but I will argue that a great deal of Godbout's cinematic *œuvre*, including work that he made on his own, is essayistic. Davis is also looking for the kind of diversity that the written essay provides, and the form that both these filmmakers seem to be looking for is not so far from the hybridised practice that we saw in the last chapter.

In the next chapter, I will draw upon the highly theoretical and semi-scientific *Screen* theorists, a body of theory that although it has been thoroughly criticised still holds considerable sway in academic cinema studies. But here I will draw upon a body of work that is less part of contemporary cinema studies, either explicitly (although his work is almost canonical, Bazin tends to be read in an almost anthropological way, like the New Critics in literary studies; the texts refuting Bazin and his new wave colleagues could fill several books) or implicitly (Philip Lopate, like most of his *belle-lettrist* colleagues, writes for journals like *Film Comment* and *Salmagundi*, and so is not on the academic film studies radar screen). In the next chapter we will see that the Brechtian/Apparatus model has problems but still brings us to some interesting places with regards to how form is related to political and ideological positioning; I think much the same is true of Bazin, Lopate, and their ideas on how cinema is often infused with references to and the formal preoccupations of other media.

II. The Films

Throughout their careers, Godbout and Davis have shown a fascination with the culture of the United States, and with the myths of the North American continent as a whole (Godbout's focus is continental, Davis is really only interested in the US, even though he had been accepted in emigrate to Canada in the mid-70s). Godbout's *Alias Will James*, like Davis' cycle of US films, visualises the United States as a sprawling, empty territory, somewhere that is therefore open to the projections of foreigners who seek to re-invent themselves. But I would make a distinction between the way that these two filmmakers see the United States. While Godbout's *œuvre* would seem to speak to a wider, more continentalist approach, it is in fact Davis who has a more diverse, comprehenisve view of the United States and its relationship to his own culture. I would like to draw upon a part of the body of writing associated with both *L'Americanité* in Québec and regionalism in Ireland, specifically the work that focusses on mixture (or *métissage*) to try to explain the different ways that these two filmmakers deal with North America.

Of all of Godbout's films under discussion here, the one that most clearly engages with the culture of the United States is certainly *Alias Will James*. Godbout focusses on Ernest Dufault, alias Will James, a Québécois who as a young man at the beginning of the 20th century headed west, eventually winding up in Montana. Along the way he got into all sort of cowboy-esque trouble with the law, and eventually became a well-known writer of western stories and painter of western images under the name Will James (a pseudonym he first adopted when he was arrested for robbing a bank in Nevada). Dufault seems to have been completely eradicated in favour of the James persona; Godbout shows that Dufault only surfaces at the end of his (their?) life, when as an old, alcoholic man Dufault/James writes letters in a choppy mixture of English and French, regretting all the lies he has told and clearly unable to make peace with the hybrid he has become. The metaphorical value of this historical narrative is clear, but Godbout shores up his film's present-day implications by following several modern-day Québec cowboys, most of whom wind up or want to wind up in either the United States or Alberta, and in so doing have to suppress their identity as Québécois. Indeed, in addition to setting aside the nuances of Québec identity, Godbout's present-day cowboys aren't particularly sensitive to the regional nuances of the United States either. At one point, Godbout interviews a young man named Daniel, who in addition to competing in rodeos has done some acting work in Hollywood. He tells Godbout how when he arrived he fit right in, because he had a generic mid-Atlantic accent, like everyone else in California. "Pacifique," Godbout says, correcting this fairly flagrant error of geography. "Oui, pacifique, on ne le remarque pas," Daniel responds, falling head-first into a pun that flies right by him (and is completely lost in the English version, where it is barely audible over the dubbed translation), but which Godbout obviously leaves in the film to illustrate how homogenous a version of "America" is created by this kind of mythology. Although Godbout illustrates a certain fondness for the dreaminess of James/Dufour, this homogeneity and its resultant alienation is at the core of the film's overall argument.

John T. Davis has, with his films about the United States, been making a very different argument about the culture of that country. While the majority of his films engage with the US in one way or another, *Route 66* is his clearest arguments for the complexity and fertile un-managability of the US's culture (this is also true of his 1991 film *Hobo*, which, in following a group of train-hopping hobos across the midwest, covers much of the same territory, literally and thematically). That this film is gripped with a sense of the hugeness of the United States is hardly a surprise, given it is made by someone from as relatively small a place as Ireland (or as as tiny a statelet as Northern Ireland). But Davis' view of the US differs from Godbout's in a way that Philip Lopate would no doubt find important: he does not have as clear an assessment of the place, or as clear an assesment of its metaphorical importance, as does Godbout. But Godbout's anti-romanticism is, I will argue, actually a considerable weakness in his overall analysis of the meaning of American culture's impact on Québec, and ironically, Davis' comparative optimism, which does sometimes spill over into romanticism (embodied by lots of long takes shot out of fast moving cars, or perhaps most clearly by the nostalgic 1950s & 60s soundtrack) is actually an indicator of a greater clarity and openness as regards the importance of that experience. Davis' argument that a spirit of rootlessness and fluidity is at the core of the American experience strikes me as being very close to the historians and cultural critics who write about *métissage* and its importance to the culture of either "America," "The Americas," or "The New World." This closeness should come as no surprise to anyone interested in the culture of Northern Ireland, whose distinctiveness as a region began to be much more widely discussed after the 1960s (especially by poet Michael Davitt). John Wilson Foster, among other critics, has written at length about this distinctiveness, and has even used a Canadian analogy. Drawing upon George Melnyk's work *Radical Regionalism*, which is concerned with the Canadian prairies but is still continentalist in a way similar to *L'Americanité*, and has a similar interest in *métissage*, Foster writes that:

> ...*Métissage* – or race mixture – has gone on in Ireland at least as long as it has in Canada, but according to [historian A.T.Q.] Stewart, it was the Reformation that prevented the assimilation of the Scots in Ireland, forcing mixed progeny to belong culturally to one side or the other.... Ulster's problem is a cultural one, then, not a racial one. So too, as Melnyk sees it, is the problem of the Canadian west, since the Métis simply function as a metaphor for him. He wishes to see a synthesis of ethnic and indigenous cultures that would eventually dismantle what he terms "the politics of otherness," which of course is what is practised in Northern Ireland. (295)

While Davis is not particularly interested in "race mixture" as such, he is quite aware of how much the United States poses quite a complex "cultural problem;" much of this, certainly, is due to his own formation in a culture as conflicted and diversified, as *métissé*, as Northern Ireland.

And that sense of diversity and complexity is by and large missing from *Alias Will James*. For while the film is obsessed with the myth of the open west and the final frontier, it visualises that region as basically empty, devoid of any culture at all and so fertile ground for someone like Dufour/James, who wants to re-invent himself totally. Godbout hints at this with his joke about pacifique and Pacific; in the world-view of the cowboy, the United States is a kind of *Terra Nullus*, as Daniel shows indistinguishable literally from sea to shining sea. This assessment of blankness would seem to be contradicted by the ostensible subject of the film, the ways that Québécois have adopted, gained sustenance from and contributed to western culture. But that culture is portrayed as overwhelmingly artificial. We see this in one present-day sequence when Godbout follows Daniel into a western clothing store. Daniel is ridiculously knowledgable about what kind of boots you should wear, what kind of cowboy hat is the stiffest, and how real cowboys always wear Wrangler jeans. Although Daniel seems entirely serious about all this, he comes across as a bit obsessed with the superficial; the bit with the Wrangler jeans really shores up the vulgar, commodified quality of the culture he has come to love. Indeed, there are two ways to read Godbout's focus on the old west and its cowboy culture. Pierre Vérroneau puts forward a quite reasonable, optimistic understanding, writing that:

> ...le film parle non seulement d'américanisation, mais d'aspiration à retrouver des valeurs mythiques, constitutives de l'Amérique du Nord – la conquête de la nature, le dépassement vers la frontière, l'énergie conquérante, l'individualisme dominant, etc. – qui ont procuré aux Américains, dès le XVIII^{e} siècle, leur sentiment d'identité, mais qui ont fait défaut aux Québécois, confrontés à ce moment d'histoire à une conquête militaire, à une répression puis à une dépression. (1990:95)
>
> [....the film speaks not only of Americanisation, but of the hope of recovering the mythic values that are constitutive of North America – the conquest of nature, the pushing towards the frontier, the drive for conquest, a dominant individualism, etc. – from which the Americans since the 18th century have secured their sense of identity, but which has been lacking in the Québécois, confronted at this point in history by a military conquest, and a repression, and then by a depression]

This position, that Godbout focusses on the cowboy myth because it speaks to the long-suppressed desire on the part of Québec for a self-determination that it is forever being denied, is both consistent with a certain Hubert-Aquin-esque sense of Québec history as one long defeat,[4] and is also a way of seeing the North American experience as something liberatory and pro-self-determination. As the Irish might say, our cousins in the United States got their Republic; why shouldn't we have ours?[5]

But the cowboy identity, as Jean Morisset (among many others) has pointed out, has no shortage of dark sides. Indeed, Morisset, perhaps like Godbout, sees the icon as very much in opposition to a Québécois identity, writing that:

> Le Ouaspe par excellence est donc un Cow-Boy solitaire qui a tout quitté pour se tenir sur les franges de sa culture, le soir à la brunante: aucune femme à l'horizon, rien que du bétail; aucun Indien dans sa vie, rien que la nature; aucune conquête à accomplir autre que celle de l'espace: aucun « intercourse » possible, sauf avec la géographie. Et, en dernière analyse, le Cow-Boy est un taureau solitaire qui n'a d'autre intercourse qu'avec lui-même. Car l'Indien, la Femme, la Nature n'existent, dans l'esprit du Macho-Ousape/Cow-Boy, que pour mettre en valeur son propre égo géographique.
> (33)
>
> [The WASP *par excellence* is therefore a solitary cowboy who has left everything to find himself on the edges of his culture, in the evening when dusk comes: no women on the horizon, only livestock; no Indian in his life, only nature; no nothing to conquer except space; no "intercourse" possible, except with geography. And, in the final analysis, the cowboy is a solitary bull who has intercourse only with himself. Because the Indian, the Woman, and Nature only exist in the spirit of the Macho-WASP/Cowboy to increase his own geographical ego.]

This seems closely related to Godbout's critique, that the cowboy embodies a kind of self-absorbed masculinity that is consistent with a puritan/Protestant Americanism but something of an anathema to the organisation of traditional Québécois society, with its emphasis on collectivity/solidarity. James left a tightly-knit, closed, history-obsessed French-Canada to become a solitary (Godbout makes it clear that James was never very close to his wife) myth-spinner, and a filthy rich one at that. This embrace of the WASP identity that Morisset sees as so central to the myth of the west is an ever-present element in Godbout's vision of the west (which seems a little strange, given that WASPs are generally considered old-stock Americans, even though an equally central element of his critique is that America has very little in the way of real history).

In all fairness, though, the film is not exactly a condemnation of western imagery; indeed, as he starts out it seems that Godbout will be attempting to show how much the Québécois have influenced the culture of the continent. Donald Smith writes that "s'il est vrai que, sur un certain plan, le « personnage » de Will James dans l'œuvre de Godbout représente l'abandon de l'identité canadienne-française et sert donc l'avertissement, il vient aussi se joindre aux autres personnages soucieux de l'environnement et amoureux des mots" (52) [if it's true that the "persona" of Will James in Godbout's work represents the abandonment of French-Canadian identity and serves therefore as a warning, it also serves to join other characters concerned about the environment and in love with words]. Indeed, in some ways the film follows the line of semi-nationalist historical archeology, similar to what we can see in a lot of work about or obviously influenced by Jack Kerouac, like Jacques Poulin's novel *Volkwagen Blues* (1984) or Herménégilde Chiasson's film *Le Grand Jack* (1990). At any rate, Godbout returns to images of Dufour's descendents sitting around a table drinking wine and recalling how little they knew about their great-uncle or grandfather. Since some theorists interested in the notion of American-ness or *L'Améreicanité* have sought to encourage a writing of history that includes the contribution of French-speakers to the life of the continent as a whole, recurring images of several educated, articulate Québécois learning about just such a forgotten contribution would seem to be entirely consistent with that movement. "La Franco-Amérique

ne saurait s'appartenir sans produire d'abord sa propre réflexion géographique et sa propre interprétation mythique sur les fondements et la signification de l'homme américain" writes Jean Morisset. "La saga de la Franco-Amérique, vue dans une des perspectives panaméricaines, n'a jamais été vraiment appréhendée par des Franco-Américains" (47) [French-speaking America wouldn't know how to belong without first producing its own geographic reflection and its own interpretation of the myth of the foundation and significance of the American man.... The French-American saga, seen in a pan-American perspective, was never really apprehended by French-Americans]. These men sitting at the table sipping wine are the French-Americans of Morisset's dreams, slowly hearing bits of the French-American saga told in a pan-American context.

The "saga" image is close to another possible description of what's being evoked in *Alias Will James*: myth. And the writings of Roland Barthes, especially his 1957 collection *Mythologies*, are an especially fruitful way to enter Godbout's corpus. Indeed, Barthes has been highly influential on the generation of Québec intellectuals to which Godbout belongs,[6] and linking the mythology that Godbout is evoking in *Alias Will James* with Barthes' *Mythologies*, which was quite widely read, seems especially organic. Writing about the difference between a plain ol' tree and a tree that has been described by Minou Drouet, Barthes speaks of "un arbre décoré, adapté à une certaine consommation, investi de complaisances littéraires, de révoltes, d'images, bref d'un usage social qui s'ajoute à la pure matière" (1957:182) [a decorated tree, adapted to a certain consumption, invested with literary indulgence, with revolts, with images, in short with a social usage that is added to the thing as such]. What Barthes sees in a tree "dit par Minou Drouet" we can see *mot par mot* in the West "dit par Jacques Godbout;" literary indulgence (the western novels written by James, which played an important part in the creation of a western narrative in the period that the frontier was beginning to be fully closed), revolts (escape from a repressive Canadian society, among other revolts, as I shall discuss momentarily), images (James' paintings, which played an important part in the creation of a western iconography at the moment when that frontier was in fact being closed) and a social usage (Dufault/James' value as an allegory for the fate of Francophone identity in North America).

Godbout, then, is trying to offer a critique of romantic myths of the American West (the myths created both in the United States and in Québec) by creating, as Oliver Stone might say, a counter-myth, one that shows the ways in which a pan-American consciousness can lead to the disappearance of marginal indentities. But there are problems with this critique, problems that will recur throughout Godbout's cinematic *œuvre*: the only marginal identity he seems able to visualise is Francophone, and this seems to me less a case of a careful consideration of national identity than a longing for a more cohesive collectivity. For while some of the thinkers engaged with certain versions of *L'Américanité* approach it from a more or less nationalist or separatist point of view (and Morisett is a good example), their task is not to re-enforce notions of national identity, but to complicate them. Godbout seems to be engaging with this version of *L'Americanité*, but I think he fails to engage with this kind of complication One indication of engagement with something other that the kind of complexity that *métissage* creates can been seen in Godbout's own writing on the film itself. In a short 1988 essay about *Alias Will James* called "French Frontier," he writes that "[e]n chaque Québécois, deux mythes sommeilleront longtemps : celui d'un paradis à atteindre vers l'Ouest américain, et celui du paradis qu'aurait pu être le Canada si la France ne l'avait perdu aux mains des Anglais" (1995:24) [in every Québécois, there are two myths that will be lying dormant for a long time: that of a paradise lying in wait in the American west, and that of the paradise that might have been Canada if France hadn't lost it at the hands of the English]. These ghosts of revolts that Barthes sees in myth Godbout also sees in the west, but Godbout is no more addressing the romantic/nationalist character of his "Canada if the French hadn't lost" paradise than he is addressing the fundamental falseness of his "western paradise" myth.

Indeed, while he shows the clearly constructed nature of a lot of imagery of the west (constructed by Will James, or by Wrangler jeans) he's not searching for a more complex, difficult reality that this simplified myth is displacing. Getting back to my rejection of Godbout's *Terra Nullus* assessment, it seems to me that he is simply uninterested in the dynamic, unstable mixture that defines both the west and the continent as a whole, certainly including Québec. Indeed, what is most striking in Godbout's mapping of the old west in this film is the way that it precludes almost all mention of Native Americans. Morisette writes that: "le Canadien vaincu et rejeté ne doit absolument rien, ni à la France... ni à l'Angleterre.... Historiquement et géographiquement, le Canadien n'a eu qu'un seul et unique allié: l'Indien" (59) [the conquered and rejected *Canadien* owes absolutely nothing, neither to France.... nor to England. Historically and geographically, the *Canadien* has had only one ally: the Indian]. This is not, and has never been, Godbout's assessment of the politics of the continent. He writes in "French Frontiers" that "[c']est trop facile d'annoncer que l'avenir ne peut parler que la langue de Pepsi-Cola. C'est infantile même. L'Amérique existe en quatre grandes langues occidentales [espagnol, portugais, anglais et français].... La littérature mondiale s'est enrichie des livres américains écrits dans ces quatre langues" (31) [it's too easy to announce that the future will only be able to speak the language of Pepsi-Cola. It's even infantile. America exists in four major occidental languages {Spanish, Portuguese, English and French}.... World literature has been enriched by the books written by Americans in these four languages]. This analysis of American culture and its contribution to global culture is colonial to the core, and is indifferent to the history or culture of those whom Morisett argues are the *Canadien*'s greatest ally. European culture, not American culture, is Godbout's starting place.

John T. Davis comes quite a bit closer to that world view in his films, which show, (sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly) the ways that Irish culture has dialogued with the culture of that continent. *Route 66*, for example, locates wandering as a central part of American culture, and while it is concerned only with the United States (and so might not seem as pluralistic as the multi-national *Alias Will James*) it is still more open to the concept of complexity and cultural distinctiveness. Indeed, the film is ostensibly concerned with the

American Midwest, a region too often portrayed as blandly homogenous; Davis' task here is to illustrate how erroneous a view of the region this is.

The famed Route 66 is the road that joined the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of the United States, so it is not surprising that *Route 66* deals mostly with the American Midwest. But Davis does show this expansive continental mid-section to be a place whose apparent emptiness allows its inhabitants to re-invent themselves. And the film has plenty of interviews with people who speak about the American Dream and how central to that dream the ability to start over is. But much of the film is in fact given over to the ways in which that dream has not come true. Davis dwells on towns that are dying, often having become little more than ghost towns. He spends some time (not a lot) explaining the situation of Native Americans, and while he is clearly invested with a certain romanticism as regards their relationship to the landscape there he is just as certainly sympathetic to the ways they have struggled against cultural erasure and to the way that they have been completely written out of the narrative of an expansive, successful America. And when he reaches urban areas (Chicago, Los Angeles) he shows the poverty and homelessness that are found there. Indeed, while a cursory glance would suggest that *Alias Will James* is the more analytical look at the west and the meaning of the United States to Québec and *Route 66* is the more romantic, I am struck by statements of Davis' like "[i]t's just so fucking obvious when you drive across America that the place is falling to pieces, and in the cities, it's worse" (O'Regan, 16). The film makes this clear; a lot of the people that Davis talks to are extremely poor, and while the urban decay that he shows will be news to nobody, the decay of America's small towns is one of the film's major preoccupations, and Davis' images do indeed fly in the face of prevailing America representation of small-town life. For Davis, small towns are not the spiritual core but the graveyard of the America Dream. While *Route 66* is full of images of the endless, rolling America landscape, and is making an obvious appeal to the seemingly, seminally American spirit of road-trip rebellion so embodied by everybody's favourite Québécois, Jack Kerouac, it is far more aware of the impact of social and economic forces. Some of Davis' formal choices – such as long takes or regular extreme long shots of the empty landscape – may suggest a *Terra Nullus* approach that is similar to Godbout's, but he tempers this romanticism with regular returns to the culture of the west, never seriously entertaining the idea that America is a land without history, with literally nothing but possibility.

Indeed, Edward Hopper has had as much of an influence on Davis as Kerouac. Davis has mentioned this in a number of interviews. He told Stephanie McBride that "[o]bviously Hopper is one of the influences. Go to a corner anywhere in the Midwest and you're in a Hopper painting" (37). John O'Regan told Davis that "[t]here's quite a painterly feel to the film – it recalls the townscapes of Edward Hopper and the landscapes of Andrew Wyeth," a statement with which Davis agreed (16). The influence of Peter Bogdanovich's 1971 film *The Last Picture Show*, a film itself quite influenced by Edward Hopper, also came up in both of those interviews. Hopper's non-urban images are notable for, among other elements, their eerie sense of longing and decay that is reasonably linked to the experience of the dust bowl (an event that Davis also mentions to

O'Regan as having strongly influenced his view of the United States [13]). Hopper's "House by the Railroad" (1925) is well known for being an influence on *Psycho*, but its sense of decaying grandeur amidst emptyness is just as clearly an influence on Davis' very different vision; his "South Truro Church" (1930) is another example of this kind of imagery. Further, some of Hopper's townscapes, such as "Drug Store" (1927) or "Early Sunday Morning" (1930) are good examples of how Hopper integrated the social anxiety of the American small-town middle class; they are images full of suggestions of past glory and contemporary lack, with an air of quiet, melancholic death hanging about them. While many of Davis' landscapes / townscapes are indeed influenced by Hopper's semi-gothic sensibilities, the Irish artist is more explicitly engaged with the depths of poverty and loss than his American mentor (and, of course, quite a bit less subtle, aesthetically or thematically). He is also more explicitly engaged with the impact that the expansiveness of the American continent has had on matters of identity and social formation than Jacques Godbout. Like Godbout, Davis sees the American myths of self-reliance and self-determination as born of the experience of marking territory that once seemed empty (and a coast-to-coast road is perhaps the ultimate such marker), but unlike Godbout he is aware of the ways that this really was a myth, that the reality of the American landscape, and particuarly the west and midwest, was simply too complex for such a simple narrative to have any basis in reality. Godbout is criticising the effect that the American (which is to say *étatsunisien*) narrative of a-historicism and re-invention has had on marginal identities, and in so doing seems to deny the existence of any

American culture at all, at least any culture that is not crass and materialist. Davis is questioning the simple veracity of the American (*étatsunisien*) myth and in so doing is pointing to the complexity and contradictions of that culture.

Despite these painterly influences, there is still an argument to be made that *Route 66* is not completely dependent on its imagery for its meaning. While the film has no text, as Lopate would expect it to, it does make the coherent argument that he looks for: that the United States is a country defined both by enormous optimism and tremendous defeat. Davis expresses this partially through the sweeping landscape shots, but also through the inclusion of long, rambling interviews; Kathleen McCracken writes that "[t]he film gives a composite picture made up of 'soliloquies' spoken by the 'characters'" (16). Indeed, these "soliloquies" give the film a much less focussed feel than could be expected of an essay film; are we straying into the realm of the collage, so disliked by Lopate? McCracken offers a way out, arguing that Davis' oevure is best desribed as "poetic." Writing about how the ideas about the filmmaker as writer (put forward by both Astruc and Orson Welles) meet in Davis' style, she writes:

> This feature, which is as much a product of attitude as style, manifests in the treatment of time, and therefore narrative structure, and of reality, which in documentary is both subject and material. His or her approach to these key cinematic concepts is in turn shaped by the conflation of normally discrete, though not entirely unrelated genres. Poetic realism and cinema vérité are here wedded to create a looser, more impressionistic format that may be called "poetic documentary."
> (13)

Following McCracken, I believe it would be an error to consider Davis a *vérité* filmmaker, a temptation that is all the more difficult to avoid because of his closeness to the American giants of *vérité* D.A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus. Davis told Dermot Lavery in a 1992 interview that "[m]y inspiration for documentary at the start was really through looking at *Don't Look Back* and Donn Pennebaker... I loved the style the man had. To me it wasn't television and it wasn't cinema, it was just revolutionary, and the black and white image – it was light dancing with light, as opposed to making a film about something" (18). I'm not sure that *Don't Look Back* is quite this non-narrative, but there's little question that Davis' films very rarely approach this level of abstraction, and they are all very clearly about something. And while *Route 66* is a portrait of a famous highway in a way that is not entirely dissimilar from how *Don't Look Back* is a portrait of Bob Dylan, there is very little analysis or rumination in *Don't Look Back* (nothing like what we see in the roughly contemporary, stylistically similar portrait of a famous singer, Roman Kroiter's 1961 *Lonely Boy*). Davis organises his landscape images and his interviews in a way that argues for the dissolution of the American Dream and the melancholic character of this loss of faith. These are not techniques or interests that he gained from Pennebaker or Hegedus. Davis participated in a discussion with the couple at the Galway Film Centre in 2001 (a discussion that was published in the journal *Film West*) where he told Pennebaker that *Don't Look Back* "in a sense started my career. That lineage led me to telephoning you in New York and meeting you and Chris. That time I was in New York was a time where I think I left Ireland and I don't know if I ever really went back. I came back physically but I left a big part of my soul in the States" (Doyle 21). But this introduction to American-ness is an extra-odd one, especially when we consider that much of *Don't Look Back* in fact takes place in England. Pennebaker's version of vérité is sprawling and disorganised, a technique that does indeed allow for occasional, often isolated flashes of visual brilliance. The close-up shots of Dylan, especially those taken at a slightly low angle and slightly off to the side, are good examples really sharp-looking images that have very little to do with any overall point Pennebaker is trying to make; a scene where Dylan and his friends get stoned out of their gourds in a hotel room and Dylan then gets insanely agitated and throws a chair around is another good example. Davis, like Godbout, is a much more subjective, focussed filmmaker, choosing a subject carefully and then showing only those parts of that topic that contribute to some kind of relatively clear assessement.

And Davis' analysis of the America-Europe relationship is a kind of reversal of Godbout's position that some scholars of *L'Américanité*, particularly that segment interested in *métissage*, would likely find familiar. Morisett writes that "à l'inverse de l'Anglo qui sera perpétuellement en quête d'américanité, le Canadien sera paradoxalement – et c'est là son aliénation tricentenaire – en quête perpétuelle d'européanité" (59) [in the reverse of the Anglo who will be perpetually in quest of American-ness, the *Canadien* will be paradoxically – and it's here that his 300-year-old alienation lies – perpetually in quest of of European-ness]. Davis, unlike Godbout, is fully aware of American culture and its diversity: he spends some time on the plight of Native Americans and on general ethnic tensions in the United States, evokes the paradox of the death of the small town, and deals explicitly with the rural/urban split that defines the United States, and arguably North America's, mythology. It is indeed he who is looking for *L'Américanité*, and his quest, which goes over many films – including *Hobo*, *Hip to the Tip – Atlantic: The Independent Years* (a 1993 portrait of the famous America record label), and, as we will see, in *Dust on the Bible* and *Power in the Blood* – could indeed be described as perpetual.

Those American films include not only *Route 66*, but also work that is a bit closer to the project of *Alias Will James*. *Power in the Blood* (1989) and *Dust on the Bible* (1989) both try to explain how the culture of Northen Ireland has been influenced by, and is an influence on, the United States. But like with *Route 66*, the crucial difference here is that these films show the culture of the US to have a complex, fully-formed culture, one that is obviously a mixture of other cultures, but which still provides the opportunity for some meaningful reflection. Comparing this work to Godbout's other American films, such as *Un monologue Nord-Sud* or *Comme en Californie*, leads me to a similar conclusion as the earlier comparison: even though Davis seems to be taking a less explicitly political position than Godbout, it is the Irish filmmaker who has a more nuanced understanding of North American culture than his more apparently *engagé* Québécois contemporary. And it is not just a matter of Godbout dealing more concretely with politics and so being less philosophical and tentative; we can see this more thoughtful approach when Davis is in more politically charged territory (literally and thematically) with his films about Northern Ireland. The crucial difference that I am positing here – that Godbout is too quick to judge and Davis more pensive – is both an evaluative statement on my part, and an illustration of the potential breadth of the essay form (from not-fully-considered polemic to rambling meditation).

Power in the Blood is a mediation on the evangelical nature of Northern Irish culture, and Davis actually began shooting it before he began *Route 66*, returning to Northern Ireland from the United States essentially to finish it. But it was not only the cultural and political questions that he encountered along Route 66 that struck him as similar to Northern Ireland, but matters of landscape as well. He told McBride that "You can go to certain parts [of Northern Ireland] and, on the right day with the right lens, you can see the plains of Kansas if you want. Barns, isolated farmhouses" (38). Kansas and Northern Ireland certainly have different landscapes (the former flat and endless, the latter comprised of rolling hills), but what seems to attract Davis to both places is a sense of emptiness. Where he differs from Godbout, though, is in his ability to see beyond this illusion (in both Northern Ireland and the United States) and find distinctive cultures. *Route 66* and *Alias Will James* had a similar linkage between culture and landscape at their cores, and while both were pessimistic about the experience of the frontier (with Davis using images of tired out small towns and Godbout using images of empty, culture-less hack writers like Dufour), both films were invested with a certain idealism about openness and freedom. Davis is doing something very different in *Dust on the Bible*. He told McBride that:

> I got my great friend Martin Donnelly to play the part of Everyman, or myself, or whatever, driving through the desolate, forlorn landscape of Northern Ireland, getting darker and darker with no hope. He comes across the slogan "Ulster Says NO" – which is at the back of the inability to think of new ways to deal with the problems. It has started to become, in its own, abstract way, a statement about the state of Northern Ireland. It became a dark, dirty little film with all the connotations of sin and guilt in your own life.
> (38)

Indeed, the device of Donnelly as a "character" who drives from prayer meeting to prayer meeting (which is similar to the driver figure that is at the centre of *Route 66*), while not exactly fictional, is a highly artificial way of drawing our attention to just how charged and certainly different from road-movie mythology the landscape of Northern Ireland can be.

Davis sees these empty roads as signifiers not of liberation or even potential but of limitation, of darkness. This is arguably not so far from what we saw in *Route 66*, with its melancholy images of a dying small-town America. But the people Davis interviewed in the American films spoke and rambled about dreams and broken dreams; the people he interviews in *Dust on the Bible* speak, and ramble (and more often yell and ramble) about salvation and apocalypse. Similarly, *Route 66* is filled with images of the great America expanse at dusk or twilight, images that invoke Hopper paintings such as "Railroad Sunset" (1927) or "Pennsylvania Coal Town" (1947), while *Dust on the Bible* has numerous shots of fire-red sunsets, striking in their intensity and very different in their effect from the more muted imagery of *Route 66*. Brian McIlroy writes that "an apocalyptic energy is suggested by Davis' camera work. He loves blazing red sunsets, and capitalises on this image, and the memory of it, by having Damian Gorman read extracts [on a voice over] from Revelations" (1998:150). What all this has to do with America is never made explicit, although anyone familiar with America fundamentalist Christianity, particularly the variety found in the rural south, would recognise the fiery rhetoric and the small town settings we see here. But *Dust on the Bible* is very much a portrait of the culture and world-view of that best-known of Ireland's regions, Northern Ireland.

Power in the Blood is an expansion on these ideas, one that makes the Northern Ireland-America link more literal. It centres around Vernon Oxford, a country and western singer and born-again Christian, who travels from his home in Tennessee to Northern Ireland, where he wants to meet with his friend Wilfie Cummings, a Loyalist prisoner at Long Kesh who has recently been born-again. How Oxford came to know Cummings is never really made clear, but it seems that the men have become quite close through phone calls and letters. A great deal of the film, though, is given over to *vérité*-style images of Oxford wandering through the streets of Belfast. Perhaps the film's key image is when Oxford joins a small crowd listening to a street musician singing evangelical, vaguely folksy songs. He listens for a while, sings along with the crowd, and eventually becomes the centre of attention (no doubt due partially to the fact that Davis' camera was following him). This sequence strikes me as important because it is a kind of metaphor for the traffic of cultural influence. The influence of the Ulster-Scots on the culture of the southern United States is well known, and Davis is clearly expecting his audience to know that, or at least to figure it out from all of Oxford's talk of how familiar this all seems. But when Oxford actually goes out onto the streets, he becomes part of a circle of exchange: he watches, he participates with the group as a whole, he takes a leadership role with others in the crowd now following him; who is imitating whose culture is unclear. The film's conclusion, which features Oxford performing in Long Kesh for the Prison Officer's Country Music Society, is equally loaded metaphorically. The sequence links the experience of political violence (which most of the inhabitants of this prison are presumably involved in) with the fundamentalist and evangelist ideology so much a part of country and western music, and so much a part of Northern Irish culture. The streets of Belfast, the corridors of Long Kesh, and the expanses of Tennessee that we see at the beginning of the film have in common, Davis is showing us, a fiery, sometimes violent but sometimes redemptive ideology: evangelical fundamentalism. *Dust on the Bible*'s dark, desolate landscapes that were home to tiny churches are, in this way, not so different from what we are seeing in *Power in the Blood*; they are all forged of a sense of destiny, of apocalypse ("Prepare to Meet Thy God" is spray-painted on a rock in *Dust on the Bible*, and in that film and *Power in the Blood* there is no shortage of street-preachers warning of the impending judgement day), and connection to a place.

This sense of place is what links these films to Irish regionalism, and, for that matter, makes them seem very similar indeed to some of the critical and historical work from Québec that deals with *L'Américanité*. For while the unique culture of Northern Ireland that Davis is describing here is not exactly evoked in an idyllic way, his films are far from being a condemnation of that culture, and equally far from being a dismissal (along the lines of what we see in *Alias Will James*). Instead, these two films gel nicely with *Route 66*, forming a trilogy that examines the ways that culture, landscape, melancholy and possibility interact.

Godbout's other American films are less concerned with landscape than these Davis films, and less than *Alias Will James*, but they are still engaged with the way that the United States has effected the evolution of Québec. Both *Un monologue Nord-Sud* and *Comme en Californie* make clear arguments about the ways that the United States has, through cultural and economic imperialism, slowly destroyed everything around it. Because of these arguments, they fit more closely into Lopate's schema for essay films than do Davis' films; they are less searching, less open to contradiction, than I think he would expect. Like *Alias Will James*, these films are not concerned with the way that culture on the continent of North America is inherently hybridised or mixed, but is instead about what Godbout sees as the all-consuming monoculture or non-culture of the United States.

Un monologue Nord-Sud is certainly the most politically *engagé* of the films under discussion here, making a highly detailed argument that the 1980s vision of Pan-Americanism is in fact American imperialism with a nicer name. It is arguably a corrective to the kind of idealism that I have been describing here; some of those influenced by *L'Américanité* may speak of *métissage*, pluralism, and the dialogue between cultures, but Godbout's position in this film is that this is in fact a monologue. One of his central examples is tourism. While he notes in voice over that as an industry it promises to create jobs and rejuvenate moribund or terminally under-developed economies, he also asserts that the industry's actual effect has been the effacement of cultural difference and the creation of an all-service economy. Tourism and travel, he argues, are not the harbingers of dialogue between cultures, but the formalisation of ecomomic hierarchies; he re-enforces the argument with images, shot during a stay in Haiti, of black people serving white people (and of black people serving corrupt, decadent dictators during a huge party given by "Papa Doc" Duvalier). There are a few shots of the Haitian landscape, but he dwells much longer on the shanty-towns and markets of Port-au-Prince, with its knee-deep mud, overwhelming smells and desperately poor. His rhetoric shifts, but his analysis remains more or less the same, when he returns to Québec. There he talks to aluminum plant workers in Drummondville about how they feel about bauxite being extracted from places like Haiti, where unions are illegal. The workers are predictably confused about the whole matter; they agree that it's unfortunate, and they have no idea how to proceed from that realisation.

So as Davis scours the urban and rural landscape of Northern Ireland and finds fundamentalism everywhere, Godbout is scouring the landscape of the Americas and finding inequity and capitalist imperialism everywhere. But Davis' vision of Northern fundamentalism seemed almost sympathetic; it was at least conflicted and complex. The merger of shots of landscape with images of fundamentalist religious practice seemed to be arguing that this was the distinct culture of Northern Ireland. He also linked this imagery to the violent, intractable political problems that define the place, but there was very little in the way of the harsh, angry rhetoric that we see in *Un monologue Nord-Sud*. The Godbout film, then, is much more argumentative and clearer about its position, and so closer to Lopate's schema for essay films. *Un monologue Nord-Sud* is a defeatist vision of a future that has very little in common with the idealism around *métissage* and mixture that defines some of the work done around *L'Américanité*. Godbout is in fact arguing that the politics of the American continents are much closer to old-style colonialism, where a powerful country strips the raw materials from poorer countries (Haiti being the classic example for Godbout) and uses somewhat-less-poor countries as disempowered middle-men (such as we see with the unionised plant workers in Drummondville, who are working for the American company Reynolds).

Comme en Californie has a similar approach to the question of how the United States has affected Québec. It is a portrait of Californian culture, one that offers occasional glimpses onto Québec. The effects of computers and of New Age philosophy are recurring themes for Godbout. He shows how these distinctly "Californian" ideologies (technophilia, fuzzy spirituality) wind up in Québec by featuring interviews with young computer science students from Université de Montréal and a philosophy professor from Université Laval who likes to use transcendental meditation as part of his teaching. And he naturally spends some time discussing Hollywood, both with montages and voice-overs and with an extended interview with Pierre David, formerly a producer of Québec films like Jean-Claude Lord's *Bingo* (1973) and now a producer for Universal (we see him obsessing over a poster for *Videodrome* [1983], directed by Canadian David

Cronenberg but produced by David for Universal). This interview is preceded by a series of shots of film production, where Godbout muses on the voice over about how "la morale californienne c'est excès, c'est luxe, c'est mode" and how "violence est devenue son system de référence, à cause du cinéma" [Californian morality is excess, luxury, fashion... violence has become its system of reference, because of the movies]. This morality is, of course, a kind of anti-morality, a signifier of the end of morality. That sense of ending is at the heart of the film, and Donald Smith identifies this as part of their film's view of landscape. He writes that "[c]omme toujours chez Godbout, les paysages ont valeur de symboles. En Californie, on est en quelque sorte au bout du monde; on a devant soi l'océan qui nous pousse à plonger en nous-mêmes, en notre vécu; on a l'impression que l'on ne peut pas aller plus loin" (192) [as always in Godbout's work, landscapes have symbolic importance. In California, you are at a sort of end of the world; you have in front of you an ocean that pushes us to go into ourselves, into our lives; you have the impression that you can't go any further]. That sense that you can't go further, that California is at the end of *something*, and so morality, culture, and religion all have to be made up, is very close to the position that *Alias Will James* seemed to be taking on the west. Although it shares with *Un monologue Nord-Sud* a critique of materialism and cultural imperialism, *Comme en Californie*'s analysis of the importance of the United States is also very close to the *Terra Nullus* concepts that Godbout would explore four years later through the persona of Ernest Dufault. For Godbout, when you arrive at the end of the world, beyond culture, history or identity, the senses of self tend to be formed by myth (of the New Age or the Old West) and empty, fantastical violence (from cowboy novels or Hollywood movies). In the immoratal words of Gertrude Stein (who was talking about Oakland, California), Godbout sees California and concludes that there is no there there.

Conclusion

The ability to see the "there" of the United States is the central difference between Godbout's and Davis' films. Godbout looks at the place and sees that, to quote Gérard Bouchard, "les valeurs de la société américaine... [sont] vulgairement matérialises et avilissantes" (1993:18) [the values of American society are vulgarly materialist and demeaning]. We see this in the excess of Californian culture, the squalour of the US-dominated Third World, and the emptiness of Ernest Dufault/Will James. Bouchard was talking about how intellectuals in the era before the Quiet Revolution saw the United States. It seems to me, though, that these American films of Godbout's are much closer to the prevailing thought of this period than they are to the Quiet Revolution era authors that Bouchard elsewhere identifies as part of the renewed spirit that was part of the literary explosion of the Quiet Revolution. Indeed, in his *Genèse des nations et cultures du Nouveau Monde* Bouchard writes of "une nouvelle vision du monde et du Nouvelle Monde." He sketches the intellectual climate of the 1950s and 1960s (including figures such as Gabrielle Roy, Roger Lemelin, Jacques Ferron, Victor-Lévy Beaulieu and Godbout) writing that "[c]'est dans ce contexte que la culture savante accéda à une vision renouvelée du continent, largement délestée des anciennes fidélités envers la mère patrie. On peut parler ici d'une réconciliation entre une élite et son environnement" (2000:161) [it's in this context that the intellectual culture acceded to a renewed vision of the continent, mostly divested of former loyalties to the mother country. We can speak here of the reconciliation between an elite and its environment]. This spirit of reconciliation may indeed be present in Godbout's novels (such as *Salut Galarneau!* [1967] or *Une histoire américaine* [1985], both of which are signature novels of *L'Américanité*), but I do not see in his films dealing with the American experience (continental or *étatsunisien*).

John T. Davis, though, does seem open to these kinds of contradictions and complexities, and I think we see this in the way that he portrays the American midwest and the United States' relationship with Northern Ireland. And if anti-Americanism is a hallmark of an earlier generation of Québec culture, then a starry-eyed romanticism about the United States and the riches and opportunity that lie there is certainly a hallmark of an earlier generation of Irish culture. Although Davis has professed some of this romanticism in interviews ("I don't feel a stranger when I go to the United States. I mean in terms of the history of the place and what our little country has given to America.... Being Irish in America is great. I love it" [O'Regan 24]), I think it is mostly absent from these films. *Route 66* is the most romantic of his films, but it is still frank about the rot of a lot of small-town American. *Power in the Blood* follows very closely on the analysis of *Dust on the Bible* in reading fundamentalist, evangelical Christianity as part of foundation myths of cultures that are very complex and which remain in the throes of unresolved and perhaps unresolvable conflicts; both films refrain from the kind of moral judgement that we see most clearly in *Un monologue Nord-Sud* but also in *Alias Will James* and *Comme en Californie*.

I do not think, though, that this is a case of Godbout making an argument, as Lopate would expect, and Davis making a collage. Both filmmakers are, finally essaysists; Davis' conclusions about American and Northern Ireland are simply less finalised, but these films are the subjective argument that these cultures are difficult to understand, made of equal parts potential and decay. He is not simply wandering through a space or an issue as the *vérité* filmmakers that Davis idolises tended to (and in this way he is quite close to Denys Arcand, who, as we will see in chapter five, made documentaries like *On est au coton* which looked like the *vérité* or *direct* films to which it was roughly contemporary but which is actually much more artificial and polemical). And it is Davis, I would argue, who is the cinematic essayist more attuned to the nuance and contradiction that defines the exploration of all cultures.

Notes:

1. Musser and Gunning have engaged in lengthy debate about early cinema history and whether it should be considered as a linear progression towards narrative or if early films, especially pre-1910 film, is actually closer to non-narrative forms like fairground attractions (and so should be considered a "cinema of attractions"). See Musser, "Re-thinking Early Cinema: Cinema of Attractions and Narrativity," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 7:2 (1994), pp. 203-32; see also Gunning's response in the same issue.

2. The New American Cinema was a loosely knit group of filmmakers in the 1950s and 60s, whose arrival was announced by the publication in 1961 of the manifesto "For A New American Cinema" in the magazine *Film Culture* (reprinted in P. Adams Sitney, ed., *The Film Culture Reader* [New York: NYU Press, 1974]). That document, though, was

signed mostly by people who would drift away from the movement, and called for the creation of a kind of off-Hollywood mode of production. The New American Cinema shortly became more known for rigorous experimental filmmakers like Stan Brakhage, Kenneth Anger, Bruce Connor, Jonas Mekas (who wrote about avant garde films for the *Village Voice* and founded Anthology Film Archives, devoted more or less to the canon of poetic cinema) and even Canadians like Michael Snow, all artists who make poetic, non-narrative films, rarely more than 30 minutes in length and utterly non-commercial.

3. The two clearest exceptions to this are Montréalers Norman McLaren and Arthur Lipsett, both of whom were obviously influential on the New American Cinema. But the question of whether their work should be considered part of Québec cinema is tricky. Bill Marshall's book on Québec cinema mentions McLaren but not McLaren's films (he discusses his being brought in by Grierson to run the NFB/ONF's animation studio and his mentorship of Claude Jutra) and makes no mention at all of Lipsett; *Le Dictionnaire du cinéma québécois*, on the other hand, has quite extensive entries on both of them. There is an argument to be made that they should not really be thought of as part of Québec's national cinema, since they are NFB/ONF filmmakers above all, in the same way that Colin Low, although based in Montréal, is not generally considered part of Québec cinema (similarly, though, Marshall mentions Low's work as an administrator but not as a filmmaker, while *Le Dictionnaire du cinéma québécois* has a long entry on him). Then again, if Québec cinema is to be considered a "normal national cinema" (in the spirit of Jacques Parizeau's longing for Québec to become "a normal country") there is an equally compelling sense that it should be able to include filmmakers like McLaren, Lipsett and perhaps even Low (though Low would no doubt bristle at that classification). Donigan Cumming, whose videos are quite influenced both by the New American Cinema and by Québec's tradition of documentary tinkering, is a clearer example of a filmmaker who, although he doesn't fit the superficial profile (a US expatriate, he is an Anglo who has worked only in small-format video, and is also an excessive, goofy experimentalist), should without question be considered part of Quebec's national cinema. These kinds of issues around national cinema are discussed at greater length in the introduction.

4. As I discussed in chapter one, Hubert Aquin's 1964 essay "L'art de la défaite" argues, essentially, that the possibility of victory has never been written into the script of history. Focussing on the failed Patriotes rebellion of 1837-8, he imagines them as a choir in a play. At the moment of their imminent victory, he writes that "[l]e choeur ne peut pas continuer parce que les autres acteurs n'ont pas dit les paroles qu'ils devaient dire.... Le choeur, figé de stupeur, ne peut pas enchaîner si l'action dramatique qui vient de se dérouler n'était pas dans le texte; les Patriotes n'ont pas eu un blanc de mémoire à Saint-Denis, mais ils étaient bouleversés par un événement qui n'était pas dans le texte : leur victoire !" (*Blocs erratiques*, 115-16) [{t}he choir cannot continue because the other actors haven't said the words they were supposed to.... The choir, dumbstruck, can't link up if the dramatic action that just unfolded wasn't in the text. The Patriotes didn't have a memory lapse at Saint-Denis, but were overwhelmed by an event that wasn't in the text : their victory!]. It's not, then, that Québec has always been bested, always been beaten down by the English. For Aquin the game is always fixed; even when the Québécois are about to win, it just can't quite happen because it's never part of the script.

5. This is actually the subtext of Godbout's 1976 film *L'invasion (1775-1975)*, a 10-minute documentary about the men who re-enact the attempt by American colonists to invade Québec during the revolutionary war. It is a film that manages to download a sense of Québécois defeat on even the traditionally triumphant history of the American War of Independence, as the invaders of the 13 colonies are bested by the British forces, thus avoiding the annexation of Québec.

6. *Mythologies* is acknowledged in the credits of the classic *cinéma direct* film about Montréal pro-wrestling, *La Lutte* (1961). Furthemore, Barthes had come to Montréal in 1960 to work on an NFB/ONF production about sports with Hubert Aquin (Godbout wrote the text of Aquin's 1962 film *À Saint-Henri, le cinq septembre*, and Godbout made a 1979 film about him, *Deux épisodes dans la vie d'Hubert Aquin*). The text of this film, which was called *Le sport et les hommes* has only recently been published, in an English translation (it has never been published in French, and is not included in Barthes' *Œuvres Complètes* [Éric Marty, éd; 3 Volumes; Paris: Seuil, 1993-95]). See Roland Barthes, "Of Sport and Men," translated by Scott MacKenzie, *Canadian Journal of Film Studies / Revue canadienne d'études cinématographiques* 6:2 (1997), pp. 75-83. MacKenzie has also written a short history of the encounter, valuable for those interested in either the film career of Hubert Aquin or in the essay film in Québec; see his "The Missing Mythology: Barthes in Québec," same issue of *CJFS/RCÉC*, pp. 65-74.

Chapter Four:
Maeve, *Les Ordres*, and Counter-Cinema

The last two chapters have dealt with how filmmakers in Ireland and Québec have used non-narrative practices, ethnographic (chapter two) or essayistic (chapter three), in order to revise concepts of how their national identities have been formed. Those chapters dealt with the geographic extremes: islands and continents. In this last part of the section devoted to non-narrative cinema, I want to examine a similar question: how two filmmakers have used a non-narrative practice – in this case counter-cinema – in order to evoke the way that their cultures dealt with moments of political violence that occurred closer to their political centres (Belfast and Montréal, respectively). Following with the conclusions that I came to in these last two chapters, I want to show here how filmmakers in Québec and Ireland have engaged both with concepts of national identity and questions of cinematic form, and show how both are complex enough to demand negotiation and qualification.

Questions around representing the un-representable that both Murphy/Davies and Brault are posing have long been a central part of studies of Holocaust cinema. Some scholars argue that in the case of the Holocaust, realist or representational strategies are blasphemous, or at least inadequate for the task of evoking horror of such magnitude.[1] Claude Lanzmann's 9½ hour documentary *Shoah* (1986) steers completely clear of a representational strategy by its refusal to use a single frame of archival footage and so represents a considerable digression from the clarity and visualisation that is expected both of conventional narratives and documentaries. Because of this move away from illusionism, *Shoah* could be seen as something of a lodestone for the counter-*Schindler* approach to historical film making (although it does, interestingly, integrate some of the subjectivity of the archival-based Holocaust film *Nuit et brouillard* [Chris Marker and Alain Resnais, 1955]). The question of whether to vividly and viscerally represent political violence in Northern Ireland and Québec, or to merely suggest and so steer clear of the reductions that such representations inevitably create, could, I think, be discussed in a similar way (although I certainly do not wish to argue that these crises are comparable to the horror of the Holocaust). But because both Northern Ireland and Québec are part of larger state formations generally considered to be peaceful and stable – Canada and the United Kingdom – the spectre of political violence (embodied, perhaps, by the FLQ bombing campaign in late 1960s Québec and the re-flaming of "The Troubles" in Northern Ireland following the civil rights demonstrations and the IRA border campaign of 1958-62) has indeed been socially traumatic. The state has responded to this trauma through militarisation; the (sometimes but not always state-sponsored) cinematic manifestations have followed along more or less classical lines, including both de-politicised melodrama and dry documentary in the cases of both NI and Québec.

Linking those two strategies, state-sponsored militarisation and classical realist cinematic form, is a project that is entirely consistent with the Althusser-influenced "apparatus theory" which was becoming prominent in film theory in the 1970s. Much of the rhetoric that surrounds this school of theory is excessive in the way it ascribes an actual, political impact upon the spectator of a classical realist text. "The spectator is torn to pieces, pulled in opposite directions," writes

Daniel Dayan in his "Tutor Code of the Classical Hollywood Cinema" essay; "[f]alling under the control of the cinematographic process system, the spectator loses access to the present" (31). Nevertheless, this theoretical impulse is still useful for the way that it calls attention to the political and ideological *possibilities* of realist form, and sometimes even hints at an alternative (such as Laura Mulvey's drawing attention to the rise of artisanal modes of film making made possible by 16mm in her seminal essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"). That alternative can be glimpsed in *Les Ordres* (1974) and *Maeve* (1982), two films that ride very closely the line between counter-cinema and realist narrative. Finally, though, both of these films lean more towards the counter-cinema side, and indeed embody a specifically Brechtian film practice by drawing upon techniques that pull the viewer outside of the story, leading that viewer towards a more critical relationship with the film and its ideology and, hopefully, opening up the possibility for political action on the part of the viewer. In short, they live up to the political and the popular imperatives of that oft-used (such as what we will see in articles from *Screen* in the '70s) and, as some critics have argued, oft-misused term (as we will see from figures such as the editors of *Jump Cut* and Robin Wood), "Brechtian Film Practice."

Les Ordres and *Maeve* are each set during periods of terrorist violence and state suppression, historical moments that, we shall see, have a great deal in common. *Maeve* is set in the early 1980s, when internments in a highly militarised Northern Ireland were becoming commonplace and militant, violent IRA activity was on the increase. *Les Ordres* takes place during October 1970, a period now known as the "October Crisis" or the "FLQ Crisis." This came at the culmination of a bombing campaign by the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ), a militant organisation that often tried to link its political goals to those of the IRA. In October 1970, the FLQ kidnapped British Trade Commissioner James Cross and Québec Minister of Labour Pierre Laporte. These kidnappings led Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau to invoke the "War Measures Act" and declare martial law, supposedly to protect other political figures from further kidnapping. When Laporte was found dead in a car trunk a few days later, the crisis escalated, and hundreds of people were rounded up and detained without charge. As in Northern Ireland of the '80s, most of these internees had tenuous, if any, connections to the FLQ, and this granting of unprecedented powers of arrest and detention seemed to be taken by the police as an opportunity to crack down on leftist activists of various stripes, including, as we see in *Les Ordres*, social workers, union activists, socialist candidates for office, and so on. What I will show in this chapter is that Murphy/Davies and Brault are representing these periods as complex moments that simply can't be encapsulated in clear, straightforwardly narrative ways (like what I've just tried to do); they use strategies that hide as much as they explain, and that constantly qualify their assertions, in a way that leaves the viewer in a position that is both critical and open to the ambiguities of lived, politically dense history.

I. Issues around Brechtian and Counter-Cinema

If the 1960s was the moment of Stan Brakhage and Kenneth Anger, two avant-garde filmmakers in a romantic tradition who later became philosophers and historians of both Hollywood and the avant garde,[2] then the '70s was the moment of Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen, politically informed theorists and historians of both Hollywood and the avant garde who later became filmmakers. This period is marked, in short, by a shift from an idea of avant-garde or experimental film making, where rigorous but traditionally humanist historical and theoretical writing might flow from such a romantically apolitical film making practice, to an idea of counter-cinema, a highly politicised film making practice which often flowed directly from theoretical arguments about feminism, structuralism and psychoanalysis. The movement is in many ways an adaptation of Bertolt Brecht's concept of "Epic Theatre" but is more directly influenced by French New Wave hero Jean-Luc Godard's shift to the left in the late sixties (a shift that was especially pronounced in his collaborations with Jean-Pierre Gorin). An understanding of some of counter-cinema's theoretical and aesthetic basics seems essential for a discussion of *Les Ordres* and *Maeve*.

Although Brecht's actual involvement in cinema was confined to the 1930s and 50s, and was largely unsuccessful (*Kühle Wampe* [1932] was not widely seen upon its release and now survives only in a few truncated prints, and *Hangmen Also Die*, which he wrote for Fritz Lang in 1943, was altered against his wishes), his ideas about distanciation, the shattering of narrative illusionism, and critical viewership were extremely important to cinema's political avant garde in the '70s. Ironically, this influence was particularly strong in Great Britain, a location that serves as the colonial centre for both NI and Québec (this is of course more implied than actual in the case of Québec, since there were not, despite holdover structures like the presence of the British crown on the insignia of the foot-soldiers, British soldiers on the streets of Montréal during the October crisis in the same way that there are still British soldiers on the streets of NI).

This interest in Brecht's relation to cinema arguably peaked in 1974-76, when the British film journal *Screen*, at that time the unquestioned voice (in English) of the leftist vanguard of film theory, published two special issues on Brecht (15:2 [Summer 1974] and 16:4 [Winter 1975/6]), the second one meant to document the "Brecht and Cinema/Film and Politics" event held at the 1975 Edinburgh Film Festival. For the *Screen* theorists, Brecht provided a new way of looking at the most basic elements of the cinematic experience: he promised to be a kind of anti-Bazin. In the Edinburgh Film Festival issue, Stephen Heath wrote that

> A materialist practice of film must... be inevitably involved in combat against the sublimation of film in the luminous reality-truth of the photograph, a sublimation which is, as it were, the very ideology of the "birth" of cinema... [S]uch a practice is, will be, in direct opposition to the founding ideology of cinema: vision is not knowledge, knowledge being on the contrary the fracturing of vision, the decipherment of the objective contradictions of reality...
> (36-37)

This is the nub of the ciné-Brechtian idea. Brechtian film practice should be *materialist*, explicitly and oppositionally engaged with (or "involved in combat" with) the way that film's and photography's mechanical processes seem to claim to unproblematically reflect a transparent reality (and, by extension, the way that the bourgeoisie claim capitalism as the natural state of things). Such a practice should also seek a deep knowledge, a genuine understanding of the complexity and contradictions of situations, and not simply a realist illusion that everything is simple and un-problematically representable.

Counter-cinematic films, sometimes made by contributors to *Screen*, such as *The Song of the Shirt* (Susan Clayton and Jonathan Curling, 1979), *Nightcleaners* (Berwick Street Film Collective, 1975), or *Riddles of the Sphinx* (Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen, 1977) sought to expose the mechanics of narrative and documentary realism. They also, by extension, sought to expose the workings of similarly "invisible" state apparatuses, such as, respectively, the means of production for textiles, the usage of non-unionised women to clean offices at night and so continue a tradition of exploitation and literal invisibility that has always defined women's labour, and the way that British middle-class women are subtly pressured to lead very alienated lives. This work, in addition to being explicitly leftist in political orientation, draws upon techniques that we also see in *Maeve* or *Les Ordres*, such as actors mouthing anti-realist monologues explaining political and historical context, a separation and then re-attachment of the actors from their roles within the narrative, or long camera movements that take the viewer outside a comfortable illusionism because they do not work like traditional Hollywood re-framing, but instead open to question what the viewer should be paying attention to,[3] and an evocation of political situations that emphasise complexity and grant no closure or finality. Jean-Luc Godard, especially in films like *Tout va bien* (1972), *Lettre à Jane* (1972), or his work in the '70s with the Dziga-Vertov collective, made similarly difficult, distancing films that were widely seen in Britain and obviously influential on both the theory and the practice of counter-cinema.

Counter-cinema was also centrally linked to arguments around feminism and a feminist film practice, and these arguments, as we shall see, are especially relevant in the case of *Maeve*. Claire Johnston, in a pamphlet published by the Society for Education in Film and Television (SEFT, *Screen*'s parent organisation), echoed the insurgent anti-realism so important to the *Screen*/Brecht group, writing that

> Much of the emerging women's cinema has taken its aesthetics from television and cinéma vérité techniques.... Women's cinema cannot afford such idealism; the "truth" of our oppression cannot be "captured" on celluloid with the "innocence" of the camera: it has to be constructed/manufactured. New meanings have to be created by disrupting the fabric of the male bourgeois cinema within the text of the film.
> (1976:214)

This indictment of even the documentary form, which had long been exempt from criticism largely because of its non-Hollywood status (how could films so few people went to see possibly be patriarchal and dominating?), is an indication of the ferocity with which counter-cinema wanted to attack traditional realism, in whatever form, exposing the hegemony inherent in *all* visual culture.

And although Laura Mulvey is possibly the most well-known and widely quoted film theorist of all time and certainly the best known feminist film theorist, she is less well known for the films she made in collaboration with Peter Wollen, films which sought to illustrate cinematically what she had written about theoretically. Reminiscing about her entry into film making at the moment that theorists were beginning to vigorously oppose Hollywood form as reflective of an authoritarian, patriarchal society, she writes that

> A similar kind of excitement compensated for the "difficultness" of the films I made with Peter Wollen, that could be described as a return to zero, or an aesthetic "scorched earth" policy. Our first film *Penthesilea* was devised very much within this intellectual and aesthetic spirit. We broke with the codes and conventions of editing that articulate a flowing, homogenous, coherent fictional time, space and point of view, using long "chapters" made up of sequence shots. The camera strategy combined with the lack of editing was intended to negate possible and expected shifts in look, in order to foreground the "work" involved in cinematic spectatorship, and undercut the looker/looked-at dichotomy that fixes visual pleasure.
> (164)

This linkage between film theory and practice, while on one level a move away from the airy, impractical abstractions that many critics grumble is at the heart of theoretical work generally, is also an attempt to move the avant garde away from the psycho-personal/autobiographical tendency embodied by Brakhage and Anger towards something that is more socially and historically informed and more engaged with the political implications of both form and content.

Wollen, Mulvey's cinematic collaborator, is also an important commentator on counter-cinema. His essay "The Two Avant Gardes" set up a split between a romantic, personal avant garde ("identified loosely with the co-op movement" [92]) and a formally rigorous, political avant garde ("the second would include filmmakers such as Godard, Straub and Huillet, Hanoun, Jancso" [92]). Describing this second avant garde, he evoked the moment of cubism and modernism of the 1920s, writing that this moment featured "a changed concept of sign and signification, which we can now see to have been the opening-up of a space, a disjunction between signifier and signified and a change of emphasis from the problem of signified and reference, the classical problem of realism, to that of signifier and signified within the sign itself" (95). This shift, from a pursuit of essentially realist aesthetics along formally innovative lines to the interrogation of the signifying process itself, is a more rigorous way of explaining the move from the era of Brakhage/Anger to the era of Mulvey/Wollen. *Maeve* and *Les Ordres*, we shall see, fall quite clearly into the camp of Wollen's second avant garde. In another influential essay on Jean-Luc Godard and counter-cinema, Wollen identifies a set of dialectics that mark Godard's emergence into counter-cinematic strategies, which we will also see in *Maeve* and *Les Ordres*: "Narrative transitivity/Narrative intransitivity; Identification/Estrangement; Transparency/Foregrounding; Single diegesis/Multiple diegeses; Closure/Aperture; Pleasure/Un-pleasure; Fiction/Reality" (79). Although they are not inherently political, Wollen saw the use of these oppositions as key to a filmmaker leading the spectator towards an active participation in the process of meaning creation, and central to the idea of a political cinematic practice.

Since the peak of the counter-cinema moment, both critically and in terms of production, concepts of cinema's relationship with Brechtian practice have been the subject of considerable argument and critique, and many of these arguments offer more insight into the complex, ambiguous cases of *Maeve* and *Les Ordres* than do the more theoretically ambitious, sometimes strident work of

Screen and British counter-cinema of the '70s. Reacting in large part to an appropriation of the Brechtian label by liberal or apolitical filmmakers and critics, the editors of *Jump Cut* published, in 1990, a brief sidebar to an essay on Fassbinder and Brecht explaining the basics of Brechtian film practice. "Mere use of documentary or commentary does not constitute the Brechtian mode," they write. "The above devices plus an emphasis on actual history and current events...are used cumulatively and for a clear social-political purpose, not just for their own sake" (105). *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* then, despite its use of direct address to the camera, is not Brechtian. Robin Wood has sought to recover a different aspect of Brechtian practice, its relation to popular forms. He writes in an article on the "New Queer Cinema" and its fondness for distancing effects, that:

> Brecht's plays (at least those which I am familiar with), never *cleanly* dissociate themselves from the basics of "Realist" theatre: they retain strong narrative lines, with identifiable and evolving characters, and they don't wholly preclude a certain degree of identification. The principle of "alienation," or, as I prefer, distanciation ("making the familiar strange"), operates to counter this without obliterating it (to do so altogether seems virtually impossible within a narrative work): the plays operate on a fine balance between sympathetic involvement and analytical (or critical) distance.
> (13)

This is the balance upon which *Les Ordres* and *Maeve*, two films quite explicitly engaged with history and its relation to (then) current events, operate. I think that both films have at their core a very Brechtian consciousness, although not necessarily in the way that this concept has been discussed in journals like *Screen*, even if some of the work published in those two special issues is useful. Keeping in mind the cautions invoked by *Jump Cut* and by Wood, I will argue throughout this chapter that both *Maeve* and *Les Ordres* illustrate Brecht's theses that political struggle is everywhere, and that it is the role of the progressive artist to centralise that struggle (as opposed to using it as a backdrop for the "real" story) and lead his or her audience into some sort of political participation, in a particularly successful way. I will also argue that *Maeve* and *Les Ordres* illustrate Brecht's contention that political conflict is complex and resistant to closure and must be represented as such, and that they illustrate how this kind of complexity can be meaningfully evoked by a breaking down of boundaries between what has come to be understood as reality and fiction. As Wood writes, though, this breakdown must not come at the expense of an accessibility or deep clarity (let alone be part of a Mulvey/Wollenesque "scorched earth policy"), and I will also argue that we see some accessible, narrative strategies at work in both films. Both *Maeve* and *Les Ordres*, far from being compromised sell-outs to audiences that demand narrative above all, are politically *and* aesthetically radical. They are works that live up to a lot of the promise of counter-cinema, a promise that most of the films from that movement failed to deliver.

I raise these sometimes dense theoretical concepts because it's not clear whether this kind of work simply offers a convenient set of tools with which to take these films apart, or whether these filmmakers were themselves concerned with these theoretical problems and therefore made them clearly present in their films. The answer to this question, in keeping with the hybridised aesthetic that both these films illustrate, is conflicted.

Jean-Pierre Lefebvre has perfectly explained the undeniably present but also undeniably ambiguous effect that Godard, the hero of counter-cinema, has had on Québec cinema. I have already discussed the difficulties that exist in comparing Godard with Québec cinema in general (in the introduction) and with Lefebvre specifically (in chapter one); some of these problems have been neatly summarised by Lefebvre himself. Writing in 1991, he asserts that Godard's *À Bout de souffle* (1959) and the American re-make *Breathless* (1983) by Jim McBride make for an interesting comparison because:

> One would be immediately struck by two antagonistic points of view: that of Godard, European, who vandalizes the form, then integrates it with the subject; and that of Jim McBride, American, who gives back to the form the academic conventions of spectacle.
>
> Québécois cinema is situated somewhere between the two points of view...
> (75)

Lefebvre's insight is key to understanding the Godardian character of *Les Ordres*: as we shall see, it is counter-cinematic along European lines, but it is not entirely unlike that most North American of cultural expressions, Hollywood narrative cinema. I would not argue that Brault was reading and responding to the theory that sprang up to explain Godard's difficult films. Regardless of whether he was actually engaged with this work, however, I think that we will see that judging from *Les Ordres* it seems safe to say that Brault was informed by the films that Godard was making, and that consequently, Brechtian theory can illuminate his work in very similar ways.

Similarly, Pat Murphy's and John Davies' work seems clearly informed by the kind of cinematic practice that apparatus-obsessed film theory was created to explain. Drawing on her interview with Murphy, Megan Sullivan points out that:

> In London, where she attended the Royal College of Art, she enrolled in film classes; one of these was a course in "Oppositional Cinema," and the subject was Northern Ireland. Murphy was the only Irish person in the class, and she watched with horror films such as *The Informer*, which relied on traditional stereotypes and newsreel footage of the North. It was then that she decided to go home to Belfast to make *Maeve*.
> (1999a:279)

That "oppositional cinema" course, taken in London in the late '70s, around the height of the British cinematic left's infatuation with Brecht, certainly would have included some consideration of the critical and oppositional strands of counter-cinema. And while the mere fact that she would sit for an interview with Claire Johnston to be published in *Screen* indicated a certain sympathy with these theoretical positions that it would seem reasonable to bring to any interpretation of the film, Murphy actually told Johnston that:

> Some people are confused by the shift from realistic drama to abstract dialogue. They feel that dialogue should be more imbedded in the drama or that it should be resolved through a more easily recognisable technique of distanciation. We resisted doing that because that strategy would leave both of those structures intact. We were interested in the point of transition – where the audience response to an incoming scene is a leftover reading from the outgoing scene.
> (1981:71)

While Murphy is clearly aware of counter-cinematic strategies (as her discussion of "distanciation" seems to indicate), she is, like Brault, sceptical of its techniques (as evinced by her interest in the "point of transition" over clearly demarcated splits between narrative and distancing). She goes on to tell Johnston that part of the reason for the middle strategy she adopts is that "Ireland doesn't have an economy which could sustain the separations that exist in Britain in the Independent Film Movement" (1981:71). Much the same could be said about Québec and the French New Wave. Just as Brault is influenced by Godard but, like a lot of Québec filmmakers, gives that practice a certain North American twist, Murphy is influenced by British theories around counter cinema, although is using popular strategies partially as an Irish-ising strategy.

II. A Conflicted Strategy for Representing Conflict

As can be guessed from the above summary, one of the enemies of '70s film theory was "identification," the process by which a spectator loses his/her own identity, and most importantly his/her own subjectivity, through identifying with a set of characters or situations presented by a film as equivalent to transparent reality. For a number of theorists, this was the path to repression, leading the viewer to masochistically suppress her own ego and view of the world (including her own view of politics and history and gender norms) in favour of an idealised representation on the screen (Mulvey argues something akin to this, as does Dayan). One of the strategies of both *Les Ordres* and *Maeve* is to weave in and out of this problem, sometimes allowing a certain degree of identification in a way that Wood calls for and much counter cinema ferociously prohibits, but at other times working against that identification.

Les Ordres is often categorised as a "docu-drama," which makes the film sound a good deal more mainstream than it actually is. This appellation no doubt stems partially from Brault's occasional use of black and white footage and his ongoing use of a sepia-toned form of colour stock that is so washed out as to sometimes look black and white and generally give the film a feel of gritty realism. Added to this aesthetic choice is Brault's use of interviews with his actors. The first of these interviews features the actors out of character, explaining to the camera who they are and what role they play. Later in the film the actors are back in character, explaining how they (the fictional characters) felt about the situations at that point in the film. That *Les Ordres*' fictional narrative is itself based on the testimony of people rounded up as part of the October Crisis only complicates the matter further. It is clear that *Les Ordres* is not adequately characterised as a docu-drama: it is a film that, like so much Québec cinema of the '60s and '70s, uses the conventions of documentary for an essentially fictional end.

These kinds of documentary-based aesthetic strategies are absent from *Maeve*, although there is a sense throughout this highly artificial film that the situation in the North is being rendered with an exceptional degree of veracity. John Hill writes of the film that "[i]nstead of giving way to the kind of generalities which smooth over the complexities of the Northern conflict, *Maeve* focuses on the social and political issues, locating them in their precise historical and territorial context" (1988:246). NI's urban and non-urban landscape (which is to say Belfast and the Giant's Causeway), as we shall see, is evoked in a way that is heavy with history and politics, and much of the film focusses on the interaction between fine political details and the business of everyday life in Belfast. So like

Les Ordres, *Maeve* is ostensibly a fiction film, but takes on the semi-didactic project of a documentary. The film's strategy is less to engage its viewer in a fictional world (to "suture" the viewer into the text, in the language of '70s film theory) than to lead that viewer into a process of discernment. So here's the first way that these films echo a Brechtian idea of theatre: both of their directors have decided, as Brecht wrote in 1927, that "instead of sharing an experience, the spectator must try to come to grips with things" (23). The primary project of *Les Ordres* and *Maeve* is to force their viewers to come to grips with political crisis, and not to transparently develop a character-centred story.

The most discussed sequence in *Maeve* where narrative identification is disrupted is when Maeve and her boyfriend Liam engage in a very didactic argument about the intersection of Republicanism and feminism as they overlook Cave Hill. McIlroy notes that their dialogue "often seems more like two monologues" and that "[t]his overwritten section of the film is very strained and uncinematic, and the actors seem unable to believe in some of the lines." Crucially, though, McIlroy also acknowledges that to fully evoke the arguments these two are wrestling with, "a different kind of emotional language must be found, some of it unspoken" (all three quotes 1998:77). Murphy's and Davies' use of stilted and even non-synchronous dialogue (sometimes we hear the two voices on the soundtrack but see that neither Liam nor Maeve are speaking – it's like a voice-over, but not quite) is a good example of the "separation" effect of which Brechtian aestheticians are so fond. By pulling apart sound and image, and making each one of them conspicuous, as opposed to invisible parts of a seamless whole, Murphy and Davies are demanding that their viewer do a fair bit of work simply to understand what's going on. As that kind of basic narrative work is being done, the possibility of doing a similar, more political kind of work opens up. As the viewer tries to understand how this discussion on Cave Hill relates to the narrative information that has come before, narrative subtexts like why Maeve is so put off by Republicanism yet stays with Liam, or why she is so uncomfortable in Belfast but returns there, float slowly to the surface in a much more pronounced way than in the identification-based sequences. These subtexts have roots both inside and outside of the narrative as such: they occupy the exact territory that Wollen argues opened up in the modernism of the 1920s, in the space between signifier and signified.

Another crucial part of this sequence, an aspect that becomes visible as this middle-space is opened up, is the impact of landscape. Most commentators on the film mention that Belfast's Cave Hill has "United Irishman associations" – Luke Gibbons (1988:247) and McIlroy (1998:77) both use that exact phrase. But Paul Willemen, otherwise a stranger to Irish cinema, offers a very detailed analysis of what's at stake in this sequence, writing that

> ...the use of landscape requires what Raymond Williams, following Brecht, called "complex seeing": the reading of landscape within the diegesis as itself a layered set of discourses, as a text in its own right... [T]he Cave Hill location provides an essential historical dimension to the intricacies of current Irish politics, refuting – implicitly – the simplistic anti-imperialist support for the Provisional IRA's activities advocated by most of the radical left in England. Instead, the film acquires a dimension that stresses the linkage between religious, class and sexual politics at work synchronically and diachronically: synchronically in the scene of the

> film and in Ireland today; diachronically as the text unfolds and in the course of Irish history.
> (141)

This call to complex seeing through the usage of landscape in a way that assumes that the viewer will know that it was at Cave Hill that the United Irishmen took an oath to rid Ireland of English domination. They were, as the film assumes the viewer knows, lead by a Deist, the famed Wolfe Tone, and comprised both of Catholics and Protestants (the Protestants were mostly Presbyterians, who were also disconnected from the official Anglican church). The sequence is also an example of the opening up of a middle space that Wollen finds typical of his second avant garde. It is in this space that the meat of Maeve's political conflict comes out. And as McIlroy suggests, this space is necessarily evoked non-verbally; while Liam and Maeve stand atop the hill in their didactic, stilted political argument, the camera pans over to a shot of the entire city of Belfast. Linking the history of the United Irishmen, the contemporary dispute between visions of women's place in Republicanism, and the landscape of Belfast is finally accomplished by purely visual means.

Throughout the film Murphy and Davies make it clear that Maeve's analysis is socialist, feminist and internationalist, and that she rejects the sexist sectarianism that she sees as central to the politics of Sinn Féin / IRA. This world view self-consciously echoes the ecumenical idealism of the United Irishmen, and so setting the film's most didactic sequence at Cave Hill is a kind of literalisation of this link, historicising what had, up to this point, been a political conflict that seemed to emanate from the tensions of the narrative itself. It is a kind of echo of

Maeve and Liam's relationship difficulties; this sequence, assembled in a way that makes it seem like an example of separation, is also the means by which the narrative is clearly joined to a very broad analysis of Irish history.

The sequence is an attempt to intervene in the writing of that history, to remind the viewer that the United Irishmen have meaning for NI, not just for the Republic of Ireland. This is an ongoing problem in Irish history. The conflict in the North is, for many in the Republic, seen as a sectarian conflict having little to do with them; the 1798 rising of the United Irishmen, on the other hand, is gladly claimed as a crucial part of the Republic's history, with its relevance to Northern Ireland seldom considered. Murphy's and Davies' use of Cave Hill seems to be a reminder to Irish radicals in both the North and the Republic of the Ulster dimension of the United Irishmen, that the idea of a modern, secular republic, along the lines of the French revolution, was born in squalid, sectarian Belfast, not modern, enlightened Dublin. Nollag Ó Gadhra has tried to recover some of this history, writing that:

> Agus nuair a tháinig a t-am i samhradh na bliana 1798 d'éiriodar amach i gcúige Uladh, in Aontroim agus i gcontae an Dúin, ach go háirithe, in agóid ghonta, gharbh atá ina hábhar cainte ó shin, agus ata ina hábhar mórtais ag na hUltaigh a thuigeann an scéal; cé gur ceart a rá freisin go bhfuil iarracht nach beag déanta le dhá chéad bliain anuas an scéal céanna a scríobh amach as stair chúige Uladh, as stair na hÉireann, agus go deimhin féin as stair an phobail Phrotastúnaigh in Éirinn.
> (98-99)
>
> [So when the summer of 1798 came, so did the uprising in the province of Ulster, in counties Antrim and Down, and in other places, as an intense protest, rough it was in its attack, and it was in a very proud way that the Ulsterites told this story. And so they were also right to say that this attempt was almost completed two hundred ago, since a story like this has been written as the history of the province of Ulster, as the history of

> Ireland, and just as certainly as the history of the Protestant people in Ireland.]

This invocation of the landscape, then, seems a self-conscious attempt not only to link the histories of the Republic and NI, but also to link the concept of that possible United Ireland with a tradition of ecumenical internationalism. Ó Gadhra is celebrating the way that this story of the uprising has become part of a regional, a national and an ethnic history; the linkage and interdependence of these modes of self-definition are all too infrequently part of Irish history. The invocation of Cave Hill, of the Ulster dimension of the United Irishmen, is a small part of arguing for that inclusion.

A sequence where Maeve and Róisín hang around in Róisín's room, naked and talking about life and politics in Belfast, also flies in the face of narrative clarity and leads the viewer towards political reflection. Martin McLoone has singled out this sequence, shot in a very long take, as particularly indicative of the film's visually complex strategy, writing that

> As the camera maintains its unwavering stare, it draws attention, not to Maeve's nakedness, but to the cultural tradition of female nudity. It lingers so long on the shot that it challenges the (male) audience to question why the scene is constructed in this way. In other words, in line with the strategies throughout the film, the mechanisms of representation draw attention to themselves.
> (143)

Like the Cave Hill sequence, which similarly disrupts narrative clarity through visual means to make an intervention about broader issues in Irish history, this sequence is intervening in gender and representational politics. Its long-take strategy is in highly-self conscious contrast to the shot-reverse shot schema that would be standard for a dialogue-heavy sequence. The Cave Hill sequence eschews shot-reverse shot by way of making Liam and Maeve seem separate from each other and yet connected to the historically-loaded landscape. In this sequence the strategy behind this aesthetic choice is quite different; the two subjects of the image are brought *together* (partially, as McLoone notes, through a use of composition-in-depth), in a way that is clearly meant to evoke a kind of sisterly solidarity. The two of them are talking about being girls and women in the male-dominated nationalist/Republican community of Belfast, but the details of that discussion almost don't matter. What becomes important about this scene is that these two women are being drawn together in a purely visual way, in much the same way that the political discussions between Maeve and Liam on Cave Hill begin to give way to the greater importance of a landscape being linked to a broader history of progressive national struggle. The process of signification is looser here, more ambiguous and difficult to follow. Rather than advancing the narrative or even advancing the film's political discourse (which it does not -- the sisters do not say anything that has not been in the film already), this sequence creates a kind of abstract mixture of two distinct subjectivities, that of the woman who has stayed in Belfast but hates it and the woman who wants to get beyond Belfast but ends up returning there from London. The solidarity that we see in this sequence both invokes and rejects the voyeuristic cinematic style castigated by feminists as patriarchal. In a kind of extreme fulfilment of feminists' worst fears about Hollywood cinema's tendency to objectify the female image, the only two people in the shot are naked women, but there is none of the manipulative cutting and framing that is central to classical form's strategy of narrative manipulation and control (or, for that matter, any of the looser, more voyeuristic framing common to pornography, a form that also depends on a fairly standardised editing pattern, with the "money shot" as its climax).

NI's not always happy reality of ecumenicism and gender solidarity is linked to the landscape in a more defeatist way at the end of the film, a sequence that links the two counter-cinema passages I have just discussed. Politically the sequence is both angry and full of possibility; aesthetically it is torn between a narrative and didactic impulse. In this conclusion, Maeve, Róisín and their mother go to the Giant's Causeway, a unique geological formation on the Antrim coast that Irish myth holds was formed by the battle between an Irish and a Scottish giant. The latter mythical figure is embodied by an aged Protestant man whom the women stumble upon; he is old, cranky, and starts to rant at them about the destiny of Ulster as they wander off together. This sequence is both consistent with a strategy of identification and more self-consciously about gender solidarity in the face of patriarchy than the less realist sequence in Rosin's bedroom, since Róisín, Maeve and their mother are quite clearly standing together against this incarnated rambling symbol of impotent masculine aggression; that sense of standing together *against* something that is made manifest was missing from the sequence in Róisín's bedroom. The Giant's Causeway scene feels self-consciously political – it's a bit too convenient that at the very moment that these Irish nationalist women are seeking some solidarity they should encounter such a neat embodiment of the imperialist patriarch, so it's hard to read it as anything but emblematic. The conclusion wears its politics on its sleeve, then, but unlike the much more self-conscious sequences such as those in Róisín's bedroom or on Cave Hill, it also draws upon (without solely relying on) an essentially identification-based strategy. Except for the visceral impact of the Giant's Causeway itself, the cinematic apparatus does not call attention to itself; we basically understand the sequence as a piece of narrative realism, of representation. Following Brecht in a way that seems to me consistent with both the *Screen* critics and Robin Wood, the Giant's Causeway sequence is highly self-conscious *and* it draws upon the popular conventions of the breathtaking landscape shot; it is a perfectly dualistic, and perfectly Brechtian conclusion to a film that has alternated between narrative and distancing strategies. And while the view of Irish nationhood that it provides is based in conflict and, arguably, in stereotypes of Protestant lunacy, it is a vision that has consensual female solidarity at its centre; this is an imagining of nation that represents quite a significant departure from more traditional, masculinist/physical-force-based imaginings of Irish nationhood that are prevalent in Northern Ireland.

Indeed, *Maeve*, like *Les Ordres*, does in some ways resemble traditional narrative cinema. Despite the film's complex flashback structure and didactic tendencies, there is character development, we see many situations unfold in a clear, linear way, and some attention is paid to the demands of narrative cinema. Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen's 1977 film *Riddles of the Sphinx* has characters and dialogue too, but its fundamental visual schema (it's a series of 180° pans, each one done in a single take) is highly disruptive and unyielding. It is possible, in parts of *Maeve*, to get involved in the narrative in a traditional way. Many of the flashback sequences are entirely straightforward expositions of Maeve's childhood and adolescence and the way that it formed her political outlook, such as memories of her sister Róisín being beaten up by Protestant kids, or of watching the 12 July Orange Parades on television with her family and having a rock thrown through their window. For a film that is indeed identifiable as part of a counter-cinema practice, *Maeve* is filled with passages of narrative lucidity that deny much of that movement's more extreme tendencies. Discussing *Maeve*'s self-conscious relationship with cinematic language, Johnston writes that "*Maeve*'s emphasis on language reflects... the possibility of developing the 'popular' as a radical concept along Brechtian lines" (1981:62).

Much the same could be said about *Les Ordres*. But in a reversal of the critical appraisal of *Maeve*, which often finds fault in its slack narrative and occasional moments of stilted artificiality (Brian McIlroy cites a *Variety* review that complains about its "makeshift script and narrative" [1998:86n4]), the accessible elements of *Les Ordres* have caused some consternation in Québec film circles. Writing in *Cinéma/Québec*, none other than Pierre Vallières[5] ripped into the film, castigating it as an apolitical "mélodrame kafkien" and finding fault with what he saw as its privileging of narrative over contextualisation and analysis. In that same issue, Michel Brûlé also argued that the film was not as *engagé* as it should be, although he acknowledged that Brault's characters each represented a strata of Québec society. Honing in on the way that narrative disrupts the possibility of political analysis, however, Brûlé writes that

> La connaissance des sévices infligés à ces victimes de la loi des mesures de guerre a certes fait basculer leur sympathie et leur indignation morale vers ces derniers [qui ont donné « les ordres »], mais ne disposant ni d'un point de vue unitaire et cohérent sur l'ensemble de la situation, ni des instruments d'analyse permettant d'avoir accès à une compréhension des vrais enjeux en cause, elles en sont restées à une indignation morale générale. La réaction viscérale tient lieu d'analyse.
> (16)
>
> [Knowledge of the cruelties inflicted on these victims of the War Measures Act certainly tipped up sympathy for them and moral indignation towards the latter {those who ordered the roundup of politicos}, but having neither a unitary and coherent point of view from the group in the situation, nor analytic tools that would lead to an understanding of the real stakes, they stayed at the level of general moral outrage. A visceral reaction takes the place of analysis.]

It strikes me, however, that this emphasis on narrative and identification is entirely consistent with a Brechtian idea of populism, so clearly emphasised by Wood. It is not so surprising that a left-wing journal like *Cinéma/Québec* would want a formal approach that is more demanding; this review was published in 1974, a period when both counter-cinema and rigorous forms of Third Cinema, such as the essay films of Octavio Gettino and Fernando Solanas, were widely seen and discussed. Despite the ways that coherent narrative demands a certain glossing rather than exploration of complexity or contradiction, Brault's effort to encapsulate this political crisis into narrative terms is not automatically a sign of compromise. This is especially true given the unorthodox qualities of that narrative, which is, after all, heavily dependent on methods like interviews with the actors, of different kinds of stock, and of a very decentred narrative with five main characters, none of whom could really be said to be at the centre of the film's overall narrative; all of these techniques disrupt realist transparency.

Indeed, its decentred narrative links *Les Ordres* quite closely to the structure of *Maeve*, about which Luke Gibbons writes that "[t]hough the leading character in the story, Maeve is nevertheless decentred throughout, making nothing happen, existing at the edges of the frame and of people's lives" (1996b:122). This is true of all the characters in *Les Ordres*, each of whom seems to exist on the edge of the story, on the edge of events which are animated by mysterious powers wholly outside the frame but whose actions form the core of the film's dramatic tension (who exactly gives "les ordres" that the guards claim to be obeying is never made clear).

Brûlé also takes aim, however, at the self-reflexive gestures in the film, also seeing them as inadequate to the task of political analysis. He writes that

> ...je n'ai vu nulle part comment on avait intégré la forme choisie par Brault... pour relater cette épisode de la vie collective... tout se passe comme si après un premier effet de distanciation les comédiens s'impliquaient sans retour dans ses "personnages" qu'on leur a demandé d'incarner. Tout se passe vraiment comme si Jérôme Lemay devient vraiment Clermont Bourdeau...
> (16)
>
> [I saw no sign of how the form chosen by Brault was integrated... to tell about this episode of collective experience... everything unfolded as if after a first distancing effect the actors put themselves back into the "characters" that they were asked to embody. Everything unfolded as if Jérôme Lemay became Clemont Bourdeau...]

What Brûlé is leaving out is that Clemont Bourdeau, even though he is a constructed character and not the actor speaking candidly, as at the beginning of the film (when the "premier effet de distanciation" is achieved), is speaking directly to the camera, and that camera's presence is unexplained in the narrative. Indeed, there is nothing to indicate the shift from the "real" interview with Jérôme

Lemay to the "fictional" interview with Clemont Bourdeau; they are both shot in the same style and centre on discussions of essentially the same issues. It is this lack of demarcation between fiction and documentary that forces a rejection of a standard viewing position, and links the film with a tradition of counter-cinema.

Following some notes left by Martin Walsh, a prolific contributor to the *Screen* debates evoked above, we can see just how neatly *Les Ordres* falls into a Brechtian schema. Walsh argues that Jean-Luc Godard is central to the idea of a Brechtian cinema, and catalogues the relevant aspects of his films, which include "a refusal of doctrine, the insistence on questions rather than answers. And this questioning concerns both the nature of the aesthetic artifact (what is film? what is theatre?) and the nature of its relationship to society and social issues" (130). These questions are at the heart of *Les Ordres*, a much more accessible film than the Godard Walsh seems to be thinking of (which presumably includes films such as *Tout va bien* or *Lettre à Jane*).

Like Murphy's and Davies' rejection of both British imperialism and patriarchal nationalism, Brault is also refusing doctrine, both that of militarist state intervention and of violent separatism, opting instead for the evocation of a sensibility that probably accounts for a majority position in Québec, that of a vague but still ever-present sense of national belonging. "They're just trying to scare us," a shop owner tells Clermont when the troops being to arrive; who "us" constitutes is clear to both of them, but unspoken. Similarly, when Clermont is asked his nationality, he responds "French Canadian," thinks about it for a second, and then says "maybe I should say Québécois." The police officer, who seemed to accept the term "French Canadian" as a *nationality* with no problem, tells him not to be a wiseguy when Clermont offers the then-emergent and slightly insurgent designation *Québécois*, and hurries him along. This kind of position, of "soft nationalism," is probably what piques the ire of Vallières, although he doesn't address it directly. What Vallières does attack Brault for, though, is equally telling. He writes that "[c]omme tout le monde, Michel Brault est conscient de l'apolitisme qui se généralise à l'heure actuelle au Québec... Mais en rétroactivant cet apolitisme au moment de la crise d'octobre, il ne respecte pas la vérité historique des faits sur lesquels il fonde le scénario du film" (19) [like everyone, Michel Brault is conscious of the apolitical feeling that gets stronger and stronger in present-day Québec... But in re-activating this apolitical feeling to the moment of the October Crisis, he is not respecting the historical truth of the facts on which his script is founded]. Vallières seems to be attacking Brault's use of testimony from those rounded up during the October Crisis, and it's difficult to miss the badly-concealed sense of irritation in his article that the characters in *Les Ordres* weren't more political, closer to his own view of how a *nègre blanc* should view the world.

Les Ordres was frequently castigated as being apolitical (especially in the pages of *Cinéma/Québec*); I would argue that it is instead reflective of a general political ambivalence that characterised the majority position in Québec in the '70s. It is realist in its political outlook, breaking from both a militant separatism and a federalist/apologist position that this militarism and repression are all in the name of keeping the peace. This failure to commit, then, instead of indicating the way that Brault is compromised, is the very realisation of the insistence on questions rather than answers that Walsh holds to be central to a Brechtian cinematic idea. Brecht was, of course, far more interested in creating a revolutionary class struggle than Brault seems to be in *Les Ordres*. Indeed, part of what Vallières seems to be expecting from the film is the presence of a more *didactic* consciousness, an indication that Brault wants to change the situation as opposed to merely illustrate its injustices and the ambiguous feelings of its victims. This kind of didactic aspiration for art is indeed part of a Brechtian legacy, and so it's especially interesting for my purposes that Vallières seems to be zeroing in on that aspect of *Les Ordres* (or the lack of that aspect) without actually invoking Brecht by name. But while it could be argued that a fully Brechtian practice demands a certain stridency or at least a more explicitly oppositional stance, what Brault is accomplishing here seems organic to the cultural climate of 1970s Québec. The armed struggle that Vallières was part of, and that he wishes Brault would more explicitly promote, never had significant popular support in Québec, not among leftist political types, not among trade unionists, not among anyone outside of a few FLQ cells and RIN meetings. This was, after all, Montréal in 1970, not Moscow in 1917 or Weimar in the 1920s. It may be that a Brechtian practice is supposed to be political, but it is also based in *populism*; the idea that armed, or even really revolutionary struggle against the Canadian government had meaningful popular support is quite a stretch. What did have popular support (despite the scepticism of much of English Canada), and what Brault is trying to illustrate in *Les Ordres*, is that many French-speaking

Québécois did have a national consciousness, and did feel that the imposition of the War Measures Act, despite support from much of English Canada, was deeply oppressive.

Continuing to follow Walsh, *Les Ordres* asks some fundamental questions about the nature of an aesthetic object. By setting itself up as a "mélodrame," *kafkienne* or not, the film is making it clear that it will be seeking to arouse emotion. Describing Epic Theatre, Brecht writes that "[i]t by no means renounces emotion, least of all the sense of justice, the urge to freedom, the righteous anger; it is so far from renouncing these that it does not even assume their presence, but tries to arouse or reinforce them" (227). Brault arouses that sense of righteous anger with great regularity. Examples of this include the scenes where the police come for Clermont Boudreau and, not finding him there arrest his wife more out of spite than anything else, or the sequence where the prison guards pretend to execute Richard Lavoie as the culmination of their attempts to psychologically damage him. The whole film amounts to a call for a sense of justice and freedom – except that, *contre* Vallières, Brault seems to read that freedom less as the creation of an independent Québec (which the film certainly does not argue *against*) than as the absence of police and military control, which he clearly believes to be unambiguously repressive. These sequences in *Les Ordres* echo sequences in *Maeve* like those of the brick being thrown through the window or of a young Róisín being beaten up by Protestant boys, or a scene where Maeve and Róisín, now in their early 20s, are stopped by the Army and made to jump up and down as two soldiers ogle them. Clear emotional response, although used by mainstream cinema to manipulate viewers away from ideological analysis, has, as Brecht well knew, the potential to lead those same viewers to an appropriately intense reaction to injustice.

This presence of identification strategies that we see in the otherwise counter-cinematic works *Maeve* and *Les Ordres* is not without precedent, and André Loiselle has drawn attention to this unlikely unity in Anne-Claire Poirier's 1980 film *Mourir à tue-tête,* a classic of Québec feminist cinema. He argues that this film, despite its self-reflexive qualities, is juggling the popular and the critical in a way that is both consistent with a Brechtian practice and with the strategies that we see throughout both *Les Ordres* and *Maeve*. Arguing that *Mourir à tue-tête*, is a merger of counter-cinema and melodrama, he writes that "[t]his conventional genre, not only because of its appeal to women but also because of its use of an excessively emotional rhetoric, as opposed to a restrictive rational idiom... can provide a rich complement to reflective counter-cinematic practices" (1999a:30). This seems to me close to Annette Kuhn's position that:

> [i]f deconstructive cinema thus defines itself in relation to dominant cinema, it is not a static entity, because its character at any moment is always shaped, in an inverse manner, by dominant cinema. Deconstructive cinema is always, so to speak, casting a sideways look at dominant cinema.
> (1999a:254)

Vallières may sneer at the way that *Les Ordres* uses the tropes of dominant forms like melodrama, but by realising that viewers do have emotional responses, and by manipulating those responses in a potentially empowering way, Brault is both speaking to a wider audience than most avant garde political films of the '70s and working, in a most Brechtian way, through a conflicted, mixed strategy of the popular and the critical. Pat Murphy has even reluctantly acknowledged *Maeve*'s link to melodrama, casting a sideways glance at the form, so to speak. In her interview with Claire Johnston (author, we should recall, of the scathingly anti-narrative essay "Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema"), she said that

> For a while I resisted basing the film inside one family, thinking that the challenge to documentary realism would be undermined by the use of another TV convention, that of the family chronicle. I was afraid of setting up a *Coronation Street* kind of identification with the characters. But as the writing went on, the tensions between these differences became an important part of the film's structure. The family was a basic unit that the film could move out of and return to. (1981:63)

Scholars who deal with counter-cinema have faced a similar dilemma (do we demand narrative, which appeals to the masses, or do we demand rigorous politics and form, which may seem elitist), but what Loiselle is leading these critics towards is very similar to Murphy's own process of discovery. The family, that ground-zero of the traditional melodrama, also turns out to be ground-zero for the intersection of Irish Republicanism and feminism. Loiselle asks "if counter-cinema can offer emotional involvement behind its sober politics, can melodrama not potentially hide, underneath its proclivity for morbid pleasures, the potential for a different kind of political empowerment?" (1999a:36). The morbid pleasures that are less part of *Maeve* than of *Les Ordres* (I'm thinking here of the endless humiliations suffered by the men in prison) are indeed hiding an analysis of the ways that state power can be invisibly mobilised when serious political challenges seem to be on the horizon. The search for this different kind of empowerment, then, is given an intensely political, populist-Brechtian imperative by both Murphy/Davies and Brault.

III. The inadequacy of vision

There is not a great deal of literature that compares Northern Ireland and Québec directly, but in what has been written there is a striking agreement about who has *managed* separatist political movements to better effect. Writing about the violent conflicts that both Québec and Northern Ireland have seen over the past few decades, Wayne G. Reilly asserts that "it has been possible to *manage* that phenomenon successfully in Canada and not in Northern Ireland" (31, emphasis mine). Tracing the material and cultural factors that have led to violent conflict in Northern Ireland and Québec and the demands for independent or radically altered state formations, Katherine O'Sullivan See writes that "in Northern Ireland, these conflicts produced enduring civil war; in Québec, they were *managed* and absorbed into normal politics" (2, emphasis mine). In one way these assertions are true enough; the possibility of violence and political instability in NI is an ongoing problem, while that kind of danger in Québec is indeed a historical anomaly. And yet, the reaction to overt violence marked a deeply unstable period in Québec. The one thing that the Canadian government was not able to do was *manage* it in a quiet, subdued way; the opinion that the invocation of the War Measures Act was an irrational overreaction by a terrified government is now commonplace, even among Pierre Trudeau's most ardent admirers. On the other hand, the hostilities in Northern Ireland have now gone on for so long that they have become something of a fixture in the life of the territory, mis-represented by news programs and sensational documentaries but certainly not under-discussed or swept under the carpet, as memories of the violence of the October Crisis often are. Both Brault and Murphy/Davies are drawn to a Brechtian, non-representational strategy precisely because of the opposite way that these crises have been handled in their home provinces.

Even thirty years after its conclusion, the October Crisis remains the dirty little secret of postwar Canadian history. The challenge to the consensus of manageability around Québec separatism that this almost unprecedented suppression of civil liberties represents is seldom discussed; the relationship that the modern PQ might have to the legacy of the FLQ, or that the Jean Chrétien Liberals might have to a legacy of impulsive crushing of dissent in times of political crisis, is simply not on the nation's political radar screen. By 1974, the October Crisis had already started to become invisible, and so it seems entirely logical that Brault chose to evoke it in a roundabout way that challenges the conventions of cinematic vision and spectatorship. Less than a period in Québec's history that is clearly remembered by many and easily evoked on film, Brault's distancing effects speak to how painful, how disruptive to a national consensus about peace, order and good government, the events of October 1970 were. In an article published in June 1975, Yves Lever counted seven fiction and documentary films about the October Crisis; the only one of them that is still important to discussions of Canadian and Québec cinema besides *Les Ordres* is Robin Spry's *Action: The October Crisis of 1970*, an NFB/ONF documentary on the subject. Relatively conventional dramas like Jean-Paul Lord's *Bingo* (1974) (to which Vallières was much kinder than he was to *Les Ordres*) or Jean-Claude Labrecque's *Les Smattes* (1972) are not widely discussed, and have not done as much to influence a collective perception of the October Crisis.[6] It's not hard to see why: a conventional approach to these events assumes that they occupy a conventional place in Québec's historical memory. Given how infrequently the specifics of the crisis are a central part of discussion of Québec separatism, it seems clear that they do not.

The opposite is true of NI, which has over the last three decades become synonymous with brutal, factional violence. Unlike the situation in Québec, there has been an enormous amount of representation of political violence, in the form of cinematic and televisual narrative and documentary. In all fairness, this is partially due to the protracted nature of the violence in NI, which is not really comparable to the flare of violence in Québec in the early '70s. At any rate, this glut of imagery is widely believed to have contributed not to a clearer but a more distorted view of the situation. McIlroy's assertion that "most television dramas and documentaries commissioned and broadcast from Northern Ireland which deal with the 'Troubles' tended to be obsessed with liberal balance, thereby risking misrepresentation of the key ideological splits in the community at large" seems especially interesting in the context of *Maeve*, which is certainly not interested in liberal balance and so is quite forthright about the splits that define life in NI. Most important, though, is McIlroy's assessment that "too often the northern Irish cities and countryside became an opaque background to standard genres, often the revenge tragedy or thriller" (both 1998:1). This echoes John Hill's critique of the "myth of atavism" common to genre films that use NI as a violent backdrop. Writing about such thrillers, he argues that "they too have opted to focus on Irish violence while failing to place it in the social and political context which would permit its explanation. And, by doing do, they too have rendered the events with which they deal largely unintelligible" (1988:178). *Maeve* is in many ways a direct response to exactly this kind of representation, so part of the visual landscape of NI (and the UK generally). Discussing the very documentaries and dramas that McIlroy and Hill are here critiquing, and echoing their critique in a remarkable way, Murphy told Johnston that "I grew up watching that kind of material on TV and concluded, finally, that it was not simply a question of anti-Irish bias and censorship, it was a problem inherent in a kind of documentary form which has a notion of objective truth and which uses a vocabulary of isolated images, constant climaxes, held together within the narrative authority of the voice-over" (1981:63). An escape from an oppressive, essentially realist *form* was the impetus for Murphy, and this is certainly a strategy that has a great deal in common with the kind of critiques of the cinematic apparatus that were gaining currency in the '70s and early '80s (to again invoke the somewhat excessive rhetoric of Daniel Dayan, Murphy and Davies seem tired of being "torn to pieces, pulled in opposite directions"). For Murphy and Davies, the way that one escapes from too much vision is through not enough vision – the replacement of visceral, de-contextualised television news montages with long takes of a landscape that seems historically important is emblematic of this shift. Brault was trying to evoke the invisibility of political strife in Québec, while Murphy and Davies are trying to deal with an overload of imagery. All three, however, are using similarly counter-cinematic strategies to get at what is missing in both sets of representations: the reality that political violence is highly complex and seldom reducible to a simple, organised narrative that requires no thought on the part of the viewer.

IV. Conclusion

Both Murphy/Davies and Brault, then, have an educational mission, trying to prod their viewer towards a fuller understanding of a complex situation. This sounds very dry, so let's invoke Brecht's writing on the theatre one last time. Defending epic theatre from charges that it's boring, Brecht said in an interview with Friedrich Wolf that "[i]t is not true, though it is sometimes suggested, that epic theatre (which is not simply undramatic theatre, as is also sometimes suggested) proclaims the slogan: 'Reason this side, Emotion (feeling) that.'" (227). This mixture of reason and emotion, this appeal to a sense of narrative identification joined with an insistence upon critical distance from both the films themselves and the official versions of the histories that inform them, are the key figures of Brault and Murphy/Davies's aesthetic and political projects. In an early essay on Brecht's theatre and the ideal Brechtian critic, Roland Barthes sets out "les plans d'analyse où cette critique devrait successivement se situer" (84). These *plans* are sociology, ideology, semiology, and *morale.* The evocation of the sociological roots and meanings of these conflicts, the ability to discern the ideological perspective of the filmmaker, the calling into question of the functioning of signified and signifier, and a sense of moral outrage at state power gone amok; all are centrally present in *Maeve* and *Les Ordres*. Produced right before and right after the boom in Brecht-influenced film theory, these two films, made in places that are too often off the radar screen for scholars interested in both avant garde practice and political conflict, both remain lasting testaments to the possibility of a fully Brechtian practice. In the next chapter, we will see the way that filmmakers in both Ireland and Québec, even as they tried to create a cinematic practice that was slowly moving towards a commercial model, drew upon techniques that Murphy, Davies and Brault would find familiar.

Notes:

1. The difficulty of representing images of the Holocaust are much-discussed in film studies. The central critical text is Annette Insdorf's book *Indelible Shadows* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

2. Brakhage is the author of *Film Biographies* (Berkeley: Turtle Island, 1977), which is comprised of long, bio-critical essays on canonical figures such as D.W. Griffith, Buster Keaton and Sergei Eisenstein, and of *Film At Wit's End* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado 1990), a collection of similar essays on American avant-gardists such as Maya Deren, Marie Menken and Bruce Connor. He is also the author of obsessive philosophical meditations on his film making practice, including *Metaphors on Vision* (New York: Film Culture, 1963). Anger is the author of the trashy but breathtakingly encyclopaedic histories *Hollywood Babylon* (New York: Dell, 1983) and *Kenneth Anger's Hollywood Babylon 2* (New York: Plume, 1985).

3. The concept of re-framing stems from Classical Hollywood's frequent use of long takes (shots that last a long time without a cut, which should not be confused with a *long shot*, which is a shot where the camera is set f ar enough back so that a person is visible more or less from head to toe). A long take where the camera doesn't move at all would be quite disruptive, making a film feel slow or wooden to a viewer used to the steady, controlling editing rhythms of Classical Hollywood. As a kind of middle strategy, it is common for Hollywood filmmakers who want to draw upon long takes to move the camera in such a way as to simulate editing, e.g. starting in a long shot and slowly panning and tracking into a medium shot or close up as a character speaks, and then

panning or tracking into another medium shot or close up as another character speaks, in a way that is slower than but still has the same basic effect as a more classical shot-reverse shot editing pattern. This is sometimes called "re-framing." Many works of counter-cinema use very long takes and complex camera moves, but they do so in a way that explicitly resists the narrative clarity that re-framing can provide.

4. Maeve of Pat Murphy's and John Davies' film is a character born in Belfast who moved to London and lived there for several years, only to return as the film opens. Maeve of the *Táin* was the queen of Connaught whose minions invaded Ulster, only to be repelled by the warrior-hero Cú Chulainn. Purely by virtue of the main character's name, then, *Maeve* is carrying some very significant symbolic baggage, announcing itself as being about a struggle in the province of Ulster that does sometimes seem to be of epic proportions.

5. Pierre Vallières is probably Québec's best-known militant separatist. He is the author of the widely-read treatise *Nègres blancs de l'Amèrique* (Montréal: Éditions Parti Pris, 1968), translated as *White Niggers of America* (Toronto: McLelland and Stweart, 1971), which he wrote in 1966, while in prison in New York awaiting extradition back to Montréal on manslaughter charges relating to the bombing of a shoe factory (he had been arrested at a demonstration in front of the UN).

6. In the October 1998 Film Studies Association of Canada newsletter, André Loiselle argued that Robert Lepage is winking at *Les Ordres* when, in his film *Nô* (1998), he makes the images of Montréal during the October Crisis in black and white. Pierre Falardeau's *Octobre* (1994), on the other hand, seems a deliberate reaction against the aesthetic of *Les Ordres*: it is an intense, visceral melodrama that focusses not on the *wrongly* imprisoned, whom many Québec radicals felt it was all too easy to sympathise with, but on the day to day existence during the crisis of the members of the FLQ cell who kidnapped and eventually killed Laporte.

Chapter Five:

Cathal Black, the Early Films of Denys Arcand, and the Move from Documentary to Fiction

The cinemas of both Québec and Ireland received significant international exposure in the 1980s and 1990s, respectively. This kind of circulation inevitably obscures, however, the period of more or less domestically-oriented, semi-commercial production that, for smaller national cinemas, often sets the stage for a fully evolved, diversified national cinema. I discuss in the introduction how most national cinemas that can reasonably be defined as such have several sectors: commercial/narrative, independent/narrative, documentary, avant-garde, etc. When a national cinema begins to emerge, only one or two of these sectors tend to be meaningfully developed; the infrastructure to create fully commercial, internationally circulate-able films, or fully non-commercial, avant garde films, are rarely present (Pat Murphy makes mention of the way the Irish film economy has limited the growth of an avant garde sector; see chapter four). Documentary and/or independent/narrative films often predominate. As a result, feature films from many national cinemas, especially (although not only) in the early periods of such cinemas, tend to be marked by thematic concerns that are largely local, production values that are relatively modest, and, at the best moments (although this is not always the case) a flexibility and openness with regards to form that is enabled by these relatively small financial stakes. These kinds of elements are particularly present in the cinemas of the Third World (Brazil makes for a good example, as does post-colonial Africa). A particularly instructive example of this moment in Québec and Ireland's cinematic development can be seen in the early work of Denys Arcand and the entire career of Cathal Black.

Both of these filmmakers began their career in political documentary, harshly criticising central aspects of their national myths. Both of them also drew upon state support for this early work and ran up against the limits of what such support can accommodate, even in states relatively interested in fostering indigenous cultural production, as I believe both Québec and Ireland have been and remain. Although their films were suppressed by those who commissioned or financially supported them, these filmmakers cannot be seen as having had their work "banned," as might be implied by the harsh treatment they endured from the commissioning agencies. That word, "banned," conjures up images of police confiscating copies of an independently produced film, arresting the filmmaker and destroying all the prints – what in fact took place in Latin America, the Middle East and Africa during the periods both Black and Arcand were completing their earlier work.[1] Arcand's and Black's experiences in Ireland and Québec, while important and instructive as to problems inherent to state support of critical culture productions, are not really comparable. Arcand's *On est au coton* (1970) and Black's *Our Boys* (1981) are, however, formally innovative and politically intense in their analyses and descriptions. They both offer important examples of cultural production that was unassimilable into a government-supported model but still highly accessible to audiences familiar with the relevant socio-political conditions, and perhaps a bit too accessible.

Much the same could be said for Arcand's *La Maudite galette* (1971), *Réjeanne Padovani* (1973) and *Gina* (1975), and Black's *Pigs* (1984), *Korea* (1995), and *Love and Rage* (1999). These films, all identifiable as semi-commercial narratives, depend heavily on the viewer's knowledge of local cultural arguments and crises, and do not always conform to the classical narrative requirements of realist form or apolitical outlook. And like the documentary work that precedes them, these films are highly critical interventions in ongoing cultural debates about national myths and the price of modernity. Both these films emerge as their respective national cinemas were beginning to emerge onto the world stage (the 70s for Québec, the 90s for Ireland), and not surprisingly they are more formally accessible and less strictly local in thematic concerns than the documentary work, but they still bear the mark of those films in a way that many other Irish and Québec films do not.

Although I would not want to argue that films like these are more authentically Irish or Québécois than some of the more widely circulated feature-length narrative films produced shortly thereafter (such as films by Neil Jordan or later films by Arcand, as we will see in the next chapter), I would see them as undoubtedly more localised in their orientation. And I also do not want to adopt a bipolar view of cinema, one unambiguously split between non-mainstream (non-profitable/virtuous) and mainstream (capitalist/evil). Indeed, I try to argue that the films under discussion here, especially the documentary films, are in fact positioned between narrative and non-narrative forms. That kind of in-between-ness, though, is itself a mark of cinematic eccentricity. Furthermore, in the next chapter I discuss Arcand's and Neil Jordan's films in terms that are often all-too-close to that kind of dualism (next time it will be locally engaged/virtuous and genre-based/evil). But my own romanticism towards non-mainstream forms and concerns aside, it is a reality of a globalised[2] cinema that aesthetic or ideological eccentricities are very rarely allowed to be part of the picture. This is not always true, but it is very often true; films that display such eccentricities are all too often brushed under the proverbial carpet. Rescuing these films from so ignoble a fate can shed light on the slightly more commercial work that comes after them, in a way that is not as true of work of filmmakers who are decidedly non-commercial, such as Bob Quinn or Pierre Perrault. We see in films by Black and Arcand a slow movement from the fringes (documentary, self-consciously dark and gloomy narratives) towards, although not quite to, the mainstream (more accessible, although still locally oriented, narratives). A full understanding of that mainstream depends, I think, on a solid knowledge of the institutional, ideological and formal characteristics of cinematic moments of prophecy, of which the early work of both Denys Arcand and all the work of Cathal Black are part.

The linkage of these specific filmmakers is not, of course, mere whimsy on my part; they share quite a few formal and thematic concerns, and so make for a particularly good entrée into feature-length narrative film making Québec and Ireland. Both filmmakers have used the documentary form to make a very clear argument, and draw quite a bit on fictional or subjective elements. But both filmmakers, once turning to fiction film making, eschewed the tendency to use documentary elements to give a realist feel (a tendency quite common in both Québec and Irish cinema). Instead, the feature length narratives by both filmmakers start out being highly artificial and moody (*La Maudite galette* and *Pigs*), then made films that were bitter about recent political history and unsparing in the use of local political detail (*Réjeanne Padovani* and *Korea*), and then made films that seemed resigned and a bit cynical about the violence and unspoken repression that has so long defined life in their home countries (*Gina* and *Love and Rage*). Arcand and Black, then, provide a very good example of two filmmakers moving from the margin towards the centre, and making that move through a very similar set of formal and thematic concerns.

I. *Our Boys* and *On est au coton*

Black and Arcand's early documentary work displays a very similar restlessness with the conventions of that form that makes their eventual turn to fictional filmmaking quite unsurprising. Black's *Our Boys* and Arcand's *On est au coton* both dispense with narrative or pedagogical clarity in favour of subjective argument and a meandering, almost slack organisation. Both films also depart dramatically from the ideological mandate of state-sponsored documentary, offering blistering critiques of the way that the elite sectors of their societies have mishandled crucial elements of their national life. Because of the harshness of their critique, the common fate that these two films suffered – being quietly snubbed, and in Arcand's case shelved, by the state agencies that commissioned or supported them – speaks volumes about what a mixed blessing state support can be (as we saw in the Introduction, state support has been *crucial* for cinema in both Ireland and Québec).

Although Arcand was trained at the NFB/ONF at a period remembered for the emergence of *cinéma direct*, his *On est au coton* (which is a Québécois colloquialism for "we're fed up") represents a significant departure from that mode. The film's formalist, self-conscious approach has, however, been widely ignored in favour of a consideration of its political impact. This represents a serious oversight, because throughout the film, Arcand uses unusual visual and aural strategies to maximise the impact of what his interviewees say about what it is like to work in a cotton mill. *On est au coton* is filled with semi-abstract images of cotton mills operating (sometimes the operators are visible, sometimes not) that are reminiscent of Dziga Vertov's *Man With a Movie Camera*. But the soundtrack during many of these sequences is so loudly filled with the sounds of the machines as to be completely overwhelming. Describing what it was like to be in one of these mills, Arcand told Montréal-based film critic Réal La Rochelle that:

> Noise is a recurring theme in the film. I wish I had had modern THX technology to convey just how unbearable it really is. The decibel levels are so high that the noise cannot be absorbed by the ear; it invades the body through every pore. We were working under the severe limitations of 16mm optical sound, which I found quite unsatisfactory. So I decided to use clear-cut alternations and brutal cuts, to set up an unexpected counterpoint between noise and silence, between noise and voices speaking in a confidential tone, and so on. I ended up handling the sound and musical sequences as if they were *musique concrète*.
> (1995:34)

Indeed, La Rochelle, scoffing at the film's activist possibilities, picks up on this musical motif, likening *On est au coton* to a *tragédie en musique*, asserting that if this had been more widely understood, "[t]he film would have delighted a handful of avant-garde cinema's happy few, or the rare disciples of an audiovisual treatment inspired by contemporary *musique concrète*" (1995:32). In one sequence mid-way through the film, Arcand follows, in a series of just a few very long takes, mill worker Bernard St. Onge from the street into his shift in the mill. The soundtrack very gradually becomes overwhelming, until the noise of the place, and the effect it must have on the workers, becomes the clear centre of the image. This is not the cool use of long takes and wandering camera that *cinéma direct* is known for; Arcand is, instead, using these same techniques to forcefully convey how oppressive an environment cotton mills are. He does this through plastic, cinematic means (expressive use of editing, of contrast, etc.), creating what is a highly artificial evocation of what Jim Leach, in a paper given at the 2001 meeting of the Film Studies Association of Canada, called Québec's "dark satanic mills."

In addition to having abstract tendencies, *On est au coton* features a number of self-reflexive gestures that draw the viewer out of the narrative itself. One example of this occurs when Arcand lets the screen go black, his voice-over explaining that Eddy King, self-made man and now owner of several cotton mills (and who would later pressure NFB/ONF chairman Sydney Newman to suppress the film), had declined to participate, or to allow any images of himself to appear in the film. The effect is especially disruptive given the almost overwhelming combinations of image and sound on which Arcand often draws; a retreat to such minimalism only adds to the film's "chunkiness." But this sequence also draws attention – in a very 1970s, apparatus-theory style – to the economics of visual imagery. The screen is black essentially because the intrenched capitalist interests did not approve of the creation of imagery at that juncture; the presence of imagery, then, must imply that the capitalist infrastructure either approved or was more successfully subverted. As we will see later, this will become especially ironic in the light of the NFB/ONF's decision not to release *On est au coton.* The black screen is merely a rhetorical gesture on Arcand's part; if he really wanted to follow through on a radical, aesthetically difficult political-economic analysis of imagery, then he would have made the whole film black, as a kind of extremist avant garde strategy that was not entirely unthinkable in the radical avant garde of the 1970s. But it is still a gesture that reflects theoretical concerns that would become important in 1970s film theory. The narrative identification that is central to realist form is forcefully denied, and done so in a way that calls attention to how images are always linked to capital, even if they seem to not be; this seems to be a seminal example of the kind of Adorno-influenced Marxism that filled the pages of *Screen* in the 70s and 80s (and which was so central to my analysis of *Maeve* and *Les Ordres* in chapter four).[3] That *On est au coton* seldom figured in such debates, despite sequences such as the bits of black screen that seem so clearly prophetic of the relevant theoretical problems, is a testament to how marginalised Québec cinema was and remains in contemporary film studies.

A different kind of self-reflexivity is present in a sequence where a policeman is hassling Arcand, asking why he is filming here and for whom he is working. Images of a filmmaker being confronted by the police over permission to shoot are also part of Hailie Gerima's *Bush Mama* (1976), a fictional film about a woman on welfare in Los Angeles. The effect is similar; in both films, the conditions of production (which remain as hidden in conventional documentary as they do in conventional narrative) are explicitly linked to state apparatuses, making the control of extra-cinematic forces over imagery crystal-clear.

Despite its status as a documentary, artificiality and subjectivity are also hallmarks of *Our Boys*. Martin McLoone writes that the film "employs a complex formal structure, mixing different filmic devices that work to extend the film's significance" (2000:139). These devices are talking-heads documentary (footage of men abused at Christian Brothers schools talking about their memories), archival/newsreel recycling (footage of the Catholic Eucharistic Congress of 1932), and narrative (which is about a Christian Brothers school where abuse is perpetrated and which is about to be closed). Interestingly, all three levels of the film have a similar visual feel; part of this is because the entire film is in black and white, but part of it is also because the entire film (including even the archival sections) is quite underlit and low-contrast, giving it a washed out, dreary feel. If *On est au coton* at times aspires to be a cacophonous mechanical symphony, then *Our Boys* at times aspires to be a *film noir*, dark and filled with dread.[4]

But this artificiality is also meant to lead the viewer towards certain analyses of the situation in a way that might not be practical, or would at any rate be much more apparently manipulated, in a strict documentary format. Black is focussing the viewer's attention and making it clear that it is *he* who is doing that focussing, not fobbing off the subjectivity of the film on his interviewees. Very subtly he brings out, for instance, the way a certain glad-handing and politicking has created a culture of invincibility and unaccountability and so allowed abuse to continue. In one narrative sequence the heads of the school are called together for a meeting with several officials from the Department of Education in addition to the local TD (Taniste Dáil, the Irish equivalent of an MP), whom the priest introduces as being from the opposition party Fine Gael (and who is played by the film's writer Dermot Healy). In another fictional sequence, the father of an abused boy goes to the school and starts to confront one of the Brothers, but is taken aside by the resident Priest, who greets him warmly and asks what has brought him back to his alma mater as he leads him on a walk across the green, clearly diffusing the situation. Sequences like these make it unambiguously clear the extent to which these schools were part of the social and political fabric, but such passages do so with so little aplomb or emotional impact, reinforcing the insidious nature of the kind of control exercised and privilege enjoyed by the Catholic Church in Ireland. Arcand told Rochelle that in a cotton mill, the oppressiveness of the noise invaded your body through every pore; he makes that clear through the high artificiality of *musique concrète*. Black, adopting quite a different kind of artificiality (narrative inserted into documentary sequences), also shows us that the kind of oppression that the film addresses is under the skin of Irish culture. Both these filmmakers are interested in the proverbial white elephants of their cultures, the aspects of political power that are, as Michel Foucault might say, everywhere and nowhere.

Like Arcand, who seemed to find his topic too overwhelming for a seamless, *direct* approach, Black's use of artificiality could also be attributed to the emotional burden of his subject matter and need for it to go beyond the conventions of documentary objectivity. There are, of course, plenty of entirely conventional documentaries about much more traumatic topics, such as the Holocaust. The most accomplished of these works, though, take significant liberties with conventional form; as mentioned in the chapter on *Maeve* and *Les Ordres*, the 9½-hour, visualisation-unfriendly film *Shoah* could be seen as the lodestone for this approach. Indeed, that chapter had as its central concern the way that certain culturally sensitive topics, such as militarist repression of political dissent, seem to overload conventional realist form. There is a very similar problem here, as Black is taking on the influence of the Catholic Church, an institution that even in the 1980s held an unquestioned position of centrality in the cultural and political life of Ireland. The *violent* nature of the control exercised by the Church is for the most part only hinted at. There are a few fleeting images of actual abuse; in one sequence a Brother hits some of the boys' hands with a belt, and in another we see a boy get hit on the head by a Brother. But for the most part, these boys are like the depressed, distracted characters of *Maeve*, haunted by violent acts about which they can barely bring themselves to speak. There is none of the emotional, visceral imagery of conventional cinema; the film feels stiff, unfriendly to the identification-based viewing strategies of conventional narrative. So like the self-conscious gestures in *On est au coton*, the artificiality of *Our Boys* has a double effect: it adds to the film's polemical force, but it also takes the viewer outside the narrative as such, creating a critical distance that is close to the practices of the proponents of Brechtian artistic practice or counter cinema.

To add fuel to the fire, so to speak, Black is taking on an aspect of the Church that had for a very long time been taken for granted, its control over education. E. Brian Titley writes that "[t]he political leadership of the new Irish state never questioned the prerogatives which the Church claimed for itself in education... They could not conceive of education apart from ecclesiastical supervision" (160). In the 1990s, the role of the Church in Irish education became a topic of regular debate and commiseration, as tales of abuse began slowly to emerge. But in the 1980s such argument was still unthinkable, with Ireland's school system organised in basically the same way it had been at the turn of the century. Indeed, this continuity made it very difficult to engage in criticism of the Catholic Church in general. The repression of Catholicism under colonialism was still a relatively recent memory, and the anti-English subtext of Church life was still part of an informal political consensus. This paradox is central to an understanding of Irish culture (and widely understood and agreed upon by Irish historians): a rigidly hierarchical Church (one that often excommunicated those engaged in revolutionary activity) is quite commonly linked to a nationalist, and indeed post-colonialist project.

By assailing the role of the Church in the emergence of the modern State, *Our Boys* managed to offend both traditionalist and *séparatiste* Irish perspectives. Black uses in *Our Boys* archival images of politicians, many of whom were literally the founding fathers of the post-colonial State, kneeling to kiss the ring of the Papal Nuncio during the 1932 Eucharistic Congress. That these images are woven in with interviews with men telling tales of horrible abuse at the hands of priests and Christian Brothers and with re-enactments of that violence makes them read as harsh critiques of the complacency of an entire generation of Irish leaders, a generation whose role in the anti-colonial project is understood by many (and not without good reason) as nothing less than heroic. So while I wouldn't argue that Black's position is consistent with the revisionist historians who sought to question the history of Ireland's supposedly glorious, violent struggle for independence (and which I discuss in more detail in the chapter on Neil Jordan's work), he is certainly opposing himself to the traditional cultural nationalists for whom the centrality in both culture and politics of a highly conservative Catholicism was often unquestionable. The situation in Québec vis-à-vis the Catholic Church is, of course, quite different: modern Québec separatism, indeed, the modern Québec state, was born of a rejection of Church paternalism, a rejection that is central to the Quiet Revolution. While it certainly has remnants within the culture, Québec's tradition of a state highly influenced and arguably controlled by a conservative, Catholic nationalism is largely a product of the pre-Duplessis era; this is not the case in Ireland, and to assault the Church is still to question the foundations upon which the modern Irish Republic was built.

So even though Arcand may appear to be less radically critical, with *On est au coton* he ventured into a similarly sensitive area, the fate of the underclass in the industrial economy of a revitalising Québec. In so doing he managed to offend a comparably diverse coalition of Québec's politically interested, from the conservatively federalist to the militantly leftist. The ways in which the film contradicts a militant political view are particularly interesting. Arcand, in a 1987 interview, brushed off the difficulties he had always had with the Québec left, stating that "[j]'ai toujours eu quelques difficultés avec les militants. Les militants sont toujours des gens extrêmement sérieux; il ne faut pas plaisanter avec leur cause. Malheureusement pour moi, j'aime bien rire" [I've always had difficulties with militants. Militants are always very serious people; one must not joke about their cause. Unfortunately for me, I like to laugh] (Jutras, La Rochelle and Vérroneau 9). I think *On est au coton* actually contradicts this statement. This early documentary is, like *La Maudite galette*, *Réjeanne Padovani*, and *Gina*, and for that matter like Black's *Pigs* and *Korea*, an intensely pessimistic film, brutally frank about the politics of Québec both before and after the Quiet Revolution and unromantic about the possibilities for the underclass. Bill Marshall reports that "[t]he original idea had been a documentary on the Quiet Revolution technocrats who would be confronted with the impossibility of resolving the crisis of this industry [textiles] in terminal decline" (149). While Marshall goes on to say that "it met hostility, too, from many on the left who disliked its refusal to question the worker's resignation" (149), it seems to me more important that the film as finished closely resembles Arcand's original idea, aiming its sights clearly at those responsible for modernising the Québec economy. The late 1960s were marked by enormous optimism, not least on the part of Québec's left, which was politically re-vitalised by the Quiet Revolution (much of the PQ was at that time left of centre; its current incarnation is a party that is actually quite close to the Republic of Ireland's Fianna Fáil, a very peculiar coalition of nationalists with widely varying social and economic positions, from the aggressively pro-corporate to the vaguely social-democratic). *On est au coton* is like a splash of cold water on that optimism, insisting, like Arcand's next documentary *Québec: Duplessis et après* (1972), that *plus ça change, plus la même chose*; it shows that the lives of the working class remained intolerable, and were likely to remain so, no matter how much political and cultural transformation might take place. Gilles Marsolais sums up the problem nicely, writing that "contrairement à la tendance militante pure et dure de l'époque qui commandait un contenu et une fin triomphalistes, (préfigurant le grand soir de la Victoire finale!), ce film propose un *constat lucide* de la situation de l'industrie du textile au Québec, en 1970, dont l'avenir n'était en rien prometteur, notamment à cause de son infrastructure archaïque et de sa situation précaire sur l'échiquier des trusts internationaux" (1997:115, emphasis his) [contrary to the pure and hard militant tendency of the time, which demanded a triumphalist content and end (prefiguring the great night of the Final Victory!), this film proposes a *clear statement* about the situation of the Québec textile industry in 1970, the future of which was not very promising, notably because of its archaic infrastructure and its precarious place in the cartel of international trusts].

Of course, *On est au coton* also offended the sensibilities of the NFB/ONF bureaucrats, particularly then-chairman Sydney Newman, whom Gilles Marsolais derides as a "unilingue anglophone, qui se voulait plus catholique que le pape dans sa défense du capitalisme et du fédéralisme..." (1997:166) [a monolingual Anglophone who wanted to be more Catholic than the Pope in his defence of capitalism and federalism]. Newman was indeed strongly disliked by many within the Québec film community, not least because of his decisions, in the wake of the October Crisis of 1970, to either insist upon cuts or refuse release to a number of films from the NFB/ONF's French unit. According to D.B. Jones, Newman decreed that Pierre Perrault's *Un pays sans bon sens!* could be released to those who requested it but was not to be shown in theatres or on television, while he upheld his predecessor Hugo McPherson's decision to completely deny release to Jacques Leduc's *Caps d'espoir* (1970) – a fate he then extended to *On est au coton* (145-56). There are conflicting reports as to the reasons for this action (summarised in Jones, 145-56), with Newman insisting that it was because of factual inaccuracies and partisan bias in the films, and Québec filmmakers insisting that it was rank censorship that came at the behest of various powerful capitalists. At any rate, this had the predictable effect of instantly transforming *On est au coton* into a *cause célèbre*, with prints being circulated "underground" until the NFB/ONF finally allowed it to be released in 1977.

Our Boys met a similar (although perhaps more moderate) fate at the hands of Radio Teilifis Éireann, who had partially funded it. And again, part of this was due to timing. Just as the October Crisis was clearly the precipitating event behind the NFB/ONF shelving *On est au coton*, it is arguable that the equivalent event that caused RTÉ to decline to air *Our Boys* was Pope John Paul II's visit to the Republic of Ireland in September 1979. This visit re-energised some of the most conservative sectors of Irish Catholicism, many of whose members would have been highly offended by archival images of the 1932 Eucharistic Congress being cross-cut with tales and dramatisations of child abuse.

RTÉ declined to show the film until 1991, by which time, as Lance Pettitt acidly puts it, "the church had proved its infallibility through highly publicised cover-ups of child sex abuse, revelations about clergy fathering children and national television discussions of the lesbian sexuality of some nuns" (104). Until then, the film had been available for exhibition, although it was not given the usual support and promotion that RTÉ lends to films that it funds.[5]

Overall, both of these films were stuck in what Ron Burnett has called "The Crisis of the Documentary Film in Québec" (and, I might add, Ireland). Burnett's 1982 article of that title was inspired – if that is the word – by Gilles Groulx's comments during a 1981 conference at the Cinémathèque Québécois. Burnett writes that:

> He [Groulx] said that Québec cinema was in crisis, not only because it had lost sight of its roots, and its political concerns, but because even its fiction films were derived from the documentary film genre, inhabited by, and instilled with, the ethos of the National Film Board. (111)

On est au coton was an exemplar of this earlier political cinema, and so was also in serious conflict with the ethos of the NFB/ONF. I agree with Burnett that it "was at one and the same time the clearest expression of this crisis and an attempt to break with it" (115). No comparable moment of crisis and longing for earlier, purer roots exists in Irish film of the late 70s, when Black was making *Our Boys*, but he was pushing up against a very similar set of institutional and ideological limitations. Robert Savage writes that the establishment of RTÉ was marked by "a debate between those who favoured a service that would be set up as an independent, commercial entity versus those who endorsed a more 'Reithian'[6] concept of a government-owned and -operated 'public' service" (xiv). While the victory was not complete, the Reithians did finally gain the upper hand at RTÉ. But what this led to, like the Griersonian NFB/ONF, was a public organisation whose objectives were based on the ideal of government-sponsored social betterment, which is not necessarily the same project as the creation of an environment in which critical intellectuals can make formally innovative work. Arcand and Black were, essentially, individualist artists working in what was in the final analysis a branch of the civil service. While Jones argues passionately and convincingly for the exceptionalism of the NFB/ONF, writing that "it is misleading and unadventurous to compare the Film Board only to other organisations and not to its own capabilities" (155), *On est au coton* and the censorship problems of 1970 do mark a period when the organisation seemed to be overwhelmed by its governmental status. Black and Arcand were making highly polemical and subjective essay films under the auspices of institutions whose mandate was primarily pedagogical or didactic; their problems, while regrettable given the possibilities of their sponsoring organisations, are not entirely surprising.

In pushing up against the limits of documentary form, both *On est au coton* and *Our Boys* were also abandoning a traditional tone of detached objectivity; what both Black and Arcand were facing, then, was just as much a generic problem as an institutional or political one. Indeed, these films belong not alongside other local films like Pierre Perrault's *Les Voitures d'eau*, which deals with Québec's maritime economy, or George Morrison's *Mise Éire*, which also uses archival footage in the service of a revisionist (but highly nationalist) historical project, but instead alongside radical films like Chris Marker's *Le joli mai* (1963) or, as Marsolais argues, Fernando Solanas and Octavio Gettino's Third Cinema classic *La Hora de los hornos / Hour of the Furnaces* (1968). They could also be said to be closer to films such as Arcand's own *Québec: Duplessis et après* or Bob Quinn's *Atlantean* (1983), both films whose politics are radical, whose tone is polemical and whose form is semi-didactic. But of the Arcand/Gettino & Solanas link, which he terms "contrôlés" (in contrast to "spontanés [ou prétendus tels]" like Perrault's work), Marsolis writes that this is "le cinéma d'enquête et d'analyse sociopolitique, dans lequel la parole est donnée aux travailleurs et aux dirigeants selon des critères nettement définis. Cinéma de démonstration et non de simple constat" (1997:204) [the cinema of inquiry and sociopolitical analysis, in which voice is given to the workers and the managers according to clearly defined criteria. The cinema of demonstration and not simply of recording]. This kind of subjectivity is also what we see in *Our Boys*. The interviewees are allowed to speak at length and do not seem to be coached or prompted, but the footage of them speaking is assembled in a highly artificial manner, which makes Black's position on the control of education by the Catholic Church demonstrably clear. These filmmakers, working in a governmental and documentary framework, ended up expanding the conventions of both. They would try to do something very similar when they turned to the production of semi-commercial feature films, works that could have some hope of a release (a kind of release that would generally be unavailable to any documentary, but especially a 150-minute work like *On est au coton* or a 40-minute work like *Our Boys*).

II. *Pigs*, *Korea* and *Love and Rage*; *La Maudite galette*, *Réjeanne Padovani* and *Gina*

Black and Arcand's early feature narratives continued with the bleak assessment of local realities that their documentaries had begun, as well as challenged generic boundaries. The first films – *Pigs* and *La Maudite galette* – were gritty portraits of the fringes of Ireland and Québec, not particularly local in their narrative details but defined by a bleakness and critical spirit that made important interventions in local debates and cultural self-portraiture. The next films – *Korea*, *Réjeanne Padovani* and *Gina* – were less grittier and low-budget-looking, and were also much more local in orientation, centring their narratives on the specifics of Irish and Québec politics (and in *Gina*'s case on Québec cinema itself) in a way that made them difficult to distribute internationally. Despite the semi-commercial nature of these first feature films (they all had some domestic release and a limited international release, both times for most part in arthouses, cinémathèques and film centres), something stood in the way of their wide acceptance, either their grubby visual feel and pessimistic outlook or their cultural and political specificity.

La Maudite galette seems to resemble a heist film; it does not take long, though, for Arcand to depart from generic conventions and head towards territory that is much more complex and ambiguous. The film's narrative is a convoluted, robbery-gone-wrong tale (or, more exactly, robberies gone wrong). A scheming woman named Berthe pays two thugs to rob and kill her husband, who owns a junkyard. She then runs away with those two thugs and her boarder Ernest. Ernest eventually kills the thugs and runs off with the *maudite galette* himself, only to meet up with Berthe at the end of the film, when they kill one another. Arcand sticks to many *film noir* conventions (jagged lighting, tough, hard-boiled characters, convoluted plot, etc.), but there is a sense throughout *La Maudite galette* that something even seedier and grimmer is unfolding here. Part of this stems from the details of the heist itself; there is no sense of class struggle, or getting the big guy here. Instead, Berthe, Ernest *et les autres* are stealing from someone who is not particularly well off (the apartment where the junk dealer lives with Berthe is decidedly modest), making the whole plan seem even more self-defeating. Further, Berthe seems to be set up as the conventional *femme fatale*, but she comes across not as a sexualised, sophisticated manipulator, but as a miserable, angry and not particularly intelligent woman who has long been beaten down in one way or another. This is most upsettingly shown in the sequence where Berthe has very awkward and cooly photographed sex with Ernest right after he has killed her husband; she later ends up getting wounded by him when he tries to escape with the cash. All of this paints a very bleak portrait of working class life in Québec, one that seems to be defined by a lack of feeling for other people and a sense of restlessness (reinforced by the film's conclusion: Ernest's parents use the money to buy a new car and go to Florida).

Another very important part of *La Maudite galette* is its visual style: it unfolds in a series of very static long-ish takes, with only the minimum amount of guidance given to the narrative. Gene Walz has written of how the film's "few commentators have the mistaken impression that the entire film is photographed in long shots and long takes" (56), but there is a palatable slowness and looseness in the film's visual schema, a slowness that I think accounts for the attempts of the film's critics to link it to a Godardian practice. Walz writes that "*La Maudite galette* is the film of a good pupil" (55), Godard being the teacher, and Bart Testa notes that "this film is really Arcand's unsuccessful experiment in Godardian stylistics" (1986:220n4) and not a genre film; Bill Marshall argues something very similar (151). Testa comes closer to explaining the duality of the film, though, when he writes that:

> Because he freezes the narrative structure in a diagrammatic rictus, parallelism in Arcand's cinema can be said to preserve something of the primitive cinema's [pre-1915] counterpoint narrative tableaux...Edwin S. Porter's *The Kleptomaniac* (1905) and the early Griffith *A Corner in Wheat* (1909), two films in which a scene-by-scene succession of self-contained narrative tableaux subsume drama under the static design of parallel structure, suggest the models on which the retarded structures of Arcand's films are to be reliably mapped out and interpreted. (1986:207-208)

So less than a rigorously self-conscious, Godardian approach, Arcand is actually adopting an inhibited, "primitive" cinematic approach that does not lead his viewer to political reflection any more than would a Biograph one-reeler. Some of these one-reelers had plenty of political impact, of course, and Griffith's *A Corner in Wheat* is a good example. That film's fiery populism, though, is not a formal matter; its *story* tells of how urban interests destroy the lives of hardworking farmers, but its editing pattern, although featuring occasional flashes of parallelism, is fairly sedate. The form of *La Maudite galette*, though, is of more central concern; the film's formal choices have just as much of an impact on the viewer, if not more so, than the film's story. But that viewer does not feel engaged or agitated, just slowed down, and maybe a little oppressed, and just barely kept from dropping out of the narrative entirely by the presence of the bare bones of a crime film.

It is also arguable that this film, like so much of Arcand's cinema and so much of Québec and Canadian cinema of this period, is influenced not by early cinema but by documentary. My supervisor Bill Beard has opined that the film closely resembles Don Shebib's equally bleak, documentary-influenced semi-heist film *Goin' Down the Road* (1970). That is an interesting link, although it strikes me that Arcand's films, both his documentaries and his fiction films, are a good deal less naturalistic than this period in Canadian and Québec cinema. *Goin' Down the Road* lacks the sheer brutality of sequences like where the gang of *La Maudite galette* tortures and then kills the junkyard owner, or when Ernest proceeds to shoot his fellow thug, his dog, and then sets the junkyard owner's house on fire. Similarly, the concluding sequence in Don Owen's *Nobody Waved Goodbye* (1964), where the protagonist Peter drives aimlessly down the road after having dropped off his pregnant girlfriend Julie at the side of the road, has a hand-held, semi-documentary clarity to it that does suggest a sense of bleakness and melancholy that is very close to the overall feel of *Goin' Down the Road*. That sequence is not really comparable, though, to the conclusion of *La Maudite* *galette*, where Ernest's parents start going down a road of their own. That sequence is artificial, almost sneering or, to borrow a term from Bart Testa's analysis of *Gina* (which I will discuss later), sarcastic. That acidic sensibility is distinct from the tendencies of the documentary-influenced fictions of Canada and Québec in the 1960s & 70s.

The films's generic ambiguity (is it a *film noir*? is it an exotic, avant-garde Québec art film?) makes *La Maudite galette* very difficult to read; this has led to some interesting misunderstandings of the film, particularly when it travelled to France. Of that experience, Michèle Garneau and Pierre Vérroneau, in their survey of Québec cinema's critical reception in France, have written that:

> La critique française est littéralement fascinée par le décalage qu'instaure *La Maudite galette*, entre un contenu « indigène » (un milieu social québécois représenté avec un grand souci de réalisme), une forme « étrangère » (structure de la série B états-unienne) et une expression « personnelle » (prolongation de la durée des plans, ralentissement du rythme, refus de l'identification émotionnelle), expression qui, en dernière instance, vient subvertir la forme empruntée et redoubler l'aspect réaliste du contenu...
> (189)
>
> [The French criticism is literally fascinated by the gap that is presented in *La Maudite galette*, between an "indigenous content" (a Québec social environment represented with a great deal of realism), a "foreign" form (the structure of an American B movie), and "personal" expression (prolonging the length of the shots, the slowing down of the rhythm, the refusal of emotional identification), an expression that, in the last instance, subverts that borrowed form and redoubles the realist aspect of the content...]

Indeed, French critics regarded this film, not as Godardian, but as American. Garneau and Vérroneau quote *L'Humanité*'s film critic François Maurin, who writes that it is "avant tout un film qui souligne combien les Québécois sont des

Américains" (cited in Garneau and Vérroneau, 183) [it is above all a film that underlines how the Québécois are Americans"]. To a French viewer very familiar indeed with Godardian playfulness (as a French critic would be), *La Maudite galette* seems to fit well into the realm of the revisionist genre film, a form emergent in the United States of the early 1970s, much better than it does into the realm of the formally aggressive generic deconstruction for which Godard was so well known. *La Maudite galette*'s mixed reception, then, is not due to it being "too Québécois." Instead, it is too thematically and formally complex to be a viable export product. Indeed, its chunkiness restricts its quality as a commercial product generally, it may have emerged during a period when the cross-pollination between fiction and documentary that was prevalent in both Québec and Canada was getting a fair bit of attention both locally and internationally, but it only appears to fit that model. Instead, like *On est au coton*, it is an artificial, defeatist and stark document of a culture in transition.

Black's first feature, *Pigs*, has a similar complexity to it. It is a fairly straightforward narrative, evoking a community of outsiders (a black pimp and his prostitute girlfriend, a drug dealer, a schizophrenic, and Jimmy, a gay divorcé who claims welfare for himself and his ex-wife in order to support the whole community) who are all holed up in a huge, decaying Georgian house. The opening images make it clear that this will be a very bleak film indeed, with a wandering camera slowly tracking over urban decay, eventually settling on a burning car. In some ways, then, the film evokes the ruined urban landscapes of Northern Ireland, even though there are no direct references to political matters.

Indeed, there is a way in which *Pigs* is a universalist, almost place-less tale about how mainstream society treats outsiders. Black very rarely moves outside of the house; this leads to a pronounced sense of detachment, of cut-off-ness, that suggests the chamber dramas of Ingmar Bergman. But at the same time, the exact makeup of the group seems politically over-determined in an Irish context, calculated to offer critiques of Irish culture's homogeneity and anxiety about non-white cultures (the black pimp), its sexual repression (the prostitute, the gay man) and its generally puritan ethos (the drug dealer). In this way, the film strongly resembles Joe Comerford's *Reefer and the Model* (1988), which centres around a surrogate family comprised of a heroin-addicted prostitute, a gay man, and two fugitive IRA volunteers. That work also seemed to have one foot in the generic conventions of the gangster film and another in the Godardian art film, as Luke Gibbons, among others, has observed (1988:272-273). *Pigs* could be said to ride a similarly fine line, drawing upon the conventions of *film noir* by using jagged lighting and evoking a complex welfare-fraud scheme that ends with the Gardaí coming in and arresting Jimmy, but doing so in a way that the narrative seems slack (like a number of other films of roughly this period, like Wim Wenders' films, or, to be more exact chronologically, those of his American protegé Jim Jarmusch), suggesting that the core of the film's meaning really lies elsewhere. And like *La Maudite galette* (and unlike Wenders or Jarmusch, who make films that are quietly, sometimes voluptuously melancholy), it uses this narrative slackness to create a sense of deeply depressing bleakness. For while *Pigs* does have a linear narrative, its primary importance is in its visual feel and seedy setting (and in this way it is perhaps not so far from *film noir*). Like "primitive" narrative of *La Maudite galette*, *Pigs* evolves in a series of tableaux, linked in a narrative chain of sorts, but just as well understood as a series of autonomous aesthetic units. The film reads, if not exactly as an Ingmar Bergman-esque meditation, then as an intense, sometimes eerie portrait of social exclusion that could very well be set in New York or Chicago in the 1950s, but for a vague but inescapable sense that these character types have some metaphorical importance to Irish culture.

Other critics, however, have offered compelling arguments that *Pigs* is in fact quite connected to lingering problems in Irish politics and culture, focussing particularly on Black's use of architecture. Jim Loter writes that "[t]he ruined townhouse in which the protagonist Jimmy sets up housekeeping stands for a distinct and particularly repressive period in Dublin's history as the British capital of colonial Ireland... it is a standing symbol of both the height of British dominance in the eighteenth century and the decay of Irish cities over the last two hundred years" (130-131). Indeed, in addition to the house's colonial echoes, it seems clear that the decay in which the film unfolds is meant to draw attention to the moribund Irish economy of the early 1980s. Setting the film in the context of the housing problems of this period, McLoone writes that "Dublin in particular suffered from an acute housing shortage in the 1960s and this was thrown into sharp relief by the rampant property speculation that characterised the times. This urban and housing chaos forms the context for Cathal Black's first feature film *Pigs*" (2000:88). Interestingly, Gene Walz has also drawn upon architectural details in explaining the alienating effect of *La Maudite galette*. Describing the scene where the junkyard owner is killed, he writes that "[t]his is all rendered eerie by the full shot of the uncle's house which frames the scene. The 19th century Québec architecture makes it look authentic but oddly out of place, and the lighting gives it more the appearance of a façade than an actual building. The scene is dislocated" (58). This would make a good description of any number of sequences in *Pigs*, whose urban landscape is clearly Georgian but which also feels artificial and façade-like. Both Arcand and Black, while offering their viewers relatively comprehensible narratives, are also investing these narratives with what Loter calls a "sense of place," drawing upon the historical implications of their landscape to form political and ideological subtexts. Québec's 19th century architecture, like that of Ireland's Georgian period, is a complex mixture of British and more regional traditions that speak to a larger cultural contact that has defined both countries. This is arguably an example of the hybridity so central to post-colonial studies, but in both of these films the invocation of this architecture seems meant to provide an example of the ghosts of domination and conflict that still haunt the localities. That these conflicts need to be suggested through details such as architecture and are never explicitly evoked is itself a statement about the political and cultural life of Ireland and Québec; difficult, unresolved history seems to be everywhere, and yet its political life is not open enough to encourage actual engagement. *Pigs*, like *La Maudite galette*, could be coherently read as a *film-noir*-ish exploration of urban margins, with a little bit of local colour added for good measure (and the ways that genre films are sometimes invested with a minimal amount of local colour will be dealt with in the next chapter, on later Arcand and Neil Jordan). But *Pigs*' relation to Irish culture is, like *La Maudite galette*'s relation to Québec culture, is clearly there for those who are inclined to look for it. For those not so inclined, though, the film is still a coherent exploration of what it means to be an outsider.

That is not really true of Black's and Arcand's next features, respectively *Korea* and *Love and Rage*, and *Réjeanne Padovani* and *Gina*. These all depend quite centrally on some familiarity with Québec and Irish history and politics, and seemed to be cutting a path that was, oddly, more localised than the lower-budget features that preceded them. They mark important moments, however, in the emergence of a national cinema in Québec and Ireland; they are conventional narratives, but narratives that resist the homogenisation that a globalised Classical Hollywood demands. These are exceptionally uncompromising works for minor cinemas, films that demand some engagement with the world outside the frame in order to be understood.

Many commentators have tried to link *Réjeanne Padovani* with European cinema. Walz mentions Renoir's *La règle du jeu* (61), Marshall invokes "Buñuel, Renoir, Rosi, opera, and Tacitus" (150), and Michel Ciment, editor of the leftist French film magazine *Positif*, also links the film to Rosi (cited in Garneau and Vérroneau 193). Just as important, if not more so, are the connections to the political and cinematic situation of Québec in the 1970s. Marshall hits this nail right on the head, writing of *Réjeanne Padovani* that:

> This devastating critique of contemporary Québec society captures the atmosphere of Montréal in between the October Crisis and the first Parti Québécois government, between Expo and the Olympics, when the long-serving mayor Jean Drapeau was embarking on grandiose urban development in cahoots with land speculators and developers. Arcand's project was also to represent in fiction some of the shenanigans observed during the 1970 electoral campaign for *Québec: Duplessis et après*, when Union Nationale candidates were visibly enmeshed with the underworld. (151)

This linkage of Arcand's fictional films with his own documentaries is a hallmark of this period in Arcand's work; as we will see, *Gina* and *On est au coton* are similarly linked. While *Réjeanne Padovani* (which takes place over the course of two days) tells the tale of a highly corrupt political official and his connection to a mob-connected contractor named Vincent Padovani and feels like it could be set in just about any major urban centre, the film mixes into this familiar narrative Montréal's ethnic rivalries (Padovani's estranged wife Réjeanne has fled to the United States and moved in with the son of the local Jewish mob boss) and its sense of political unrest (a subplot involves the threat that the opening of the highway Padovani has built will be disrupted by "radicals") that was very much part of the Montréal climate of the 1970s. None of this is essential to an understanding of *Réjeanne Padovani*, but the specificities of Montréal and Québec generally are undeniably present in the film. It is, on one level, a tale of political corruption, but that is only part of the film's importance.

Pierre Vallières, writing in *Cinéma/Québec*, both links the film to the Italian cinema of the 1970s (not an unreasonable position) *and* seems to think that the film's overall statement is that "il faudra rien de moins qu'une profonde et radicale révolution culturelle" (1973:8) [nothing less than a profound and radical cultural revolution will be necessary], an assessment that is typical of Vallières' pious leftism but entirely inorganic to *Réjeanne Padovani*, or Arcand's work as a whole. This film is no more calling for a more perfect revolution than was *On est au coton* calling for workers to rise up and overthrow their bosses. Instead, it is, like the Arcand films we have discussed so far, a cynical, acidic portrait of a culture where defeat was settling in as a defining characteristic of everyday life. Walz sees this melancholia as central to the film's look, and at the risk of turning this discussion of *Réjeanne Padovani* into a tour through world cinema, I think it is useful to comment on his comparison of the film with *The Godfather*. He writes that "[m]issing from *Réjeanne Padovani* are the colourful, vital and distinctive supporting characters Coppola used so effectively to enliven his immensely popular film. Arcand's characters are virtually indistinguishable and are rendered in dark greys and cold blues; there is none of Coppola's warm and nostalgic Rembrandian glow in Arcand's film" (62). These elements are missing because Arcand does not share the romanticism or nostalgia that Coppola has for the old-world values of the 1950s New York mafia (and the absence of these kinds of values is the theme of the much more cynical and more visually drab *Godfather II*). Less than a re-make of the *Godfather* films, a Buñuel-style satire of the political class, or even a 1970s-Italian-style political film (Rosi, Scola, Bertolucci, etc.), *Réjeanne Padovani* is a continuation of Arcand's critique of the Quiet Revolution, one that starts with *On est au coton*, and goes right on through *La Maudite galette*, *Québec: Duplessis et après*, and *Gina*. These are films about the futility of political action, and about the shabby state of Québec cultural and political life. The sense of disillusionment that is present in Québec in the wake of the October crisis (which could certainly be seen as the end of the enthusiasm of the Quiet Revolution) is quite visible in *Réjanne Padovani*, and is even more central, as I will argue, in Arcand's next film, *Gina*. Walz writes that *Réjanne Padovani* "is bleaker and more challenging than Buñuel's Surrealist classic [1972's *Le Charme discret de la bourgeoisie*] because it is without the redeeming playfulness and fanciful wit. Bracing and accusatory, it is alert to local politics, universal issues and international developments in the cinema" (63). This lack of redemption, of playfulness, and of wit, basically the aspects that separate Arcand from his contemporaries, could be very reasonably be explained by the sense of political *ennui* that marks Québec, as Marshall points out, between Expo 67 and the first PQ government in 1976. A meaningful understanding of *Réjeanne Padovani* must take into account these aspects of local politics; reading it as a North American version of European political cinema paints an incomplete picture.

Vallières' linkage of *Réjeanne Padovani* to an internationalist, place-less revolutionary spirit is a version of such an incomplete picture; saying that the film is really longing for a Québec revolution is a bit like saying that Black's *Korea* is longing for clearer winners in civil wars. *Korea*, based on a short story by John McGahern, is similar to *Réjeanne Padovani* in that it seems to be a fairly straightforward tale of neighbour against neighbour (as *Réjeanne Padovani* seems to be a fairly straightforward tale of political corruption), but like with Arcand's film, this only tells part, and for that matter a fairly uninteresting part, of the story.

Set in rural County Cavan in the 1950s, the narrative centres around John Doyle, who fought with the anti-treaty/Republican forces in the Civil War and now ekes out a meagre living fishing in the lakes, and Ben Moran, who sided with the Free Staters and is now a civil servant and advocate of rural electrification, tourism, and the abandonment of the poverty of a sustenance economy. When Moran's son is killed fighting with the US Army in Korea, he gets a hefty sum from the US government in compensation. This only makes Doyle grow more angry and embittered than he already is as the result of what he perceives to be unfair treatment at the hands of a Free-Stater-dominated post-Civil-War government. When he discovers that his son is in love with Doyle's daughter, he demands that the boy go away to the US. Metaphors for unresolved political arguments hang heavily over the film, most notably the conflict between the modernising, compromise-oriented and relatively affluent Free Stater and the nostalgic, unyielding, angry and embattled Fenian. These attributes are all very clearly linked in the narrative, and Black seems attracted to them because they give a good sense of just how weighted down Ireland still is by its unresolved history. Even the film's setting is heavy with metaphor; Cavan is right on the border of the Republic and Northern Ireland, and although it is part of the Republic it is also part of the province of Ulster.[7] Its landscape is quite unlike anywhere else on the island of Ireland; it has more lakes than any other county, but it is landlocked, and so has a pronounced maritime feel while being utterly non-coastal. Black uses all of these elements to make Cavan feel like something of a world apart, one that contains many sometimes contradictory political and cultural problems (reliance on a dying fishing economy, proximity to unresolved conflict with the British, a lush, green environment, a sense of being hemmed-in and without ability to move or change). Lance Pettitt writes that "Black's achievement in the film is (like [Thaddeus] O'Sullivan in *December Bride*) to marry characters to place and create a narrative whose unfolding has a measured, almost restrained pace" (266).

Indeed, *Korea* can be very fruitfully linked to *December Bride* in its use of the landscape to evoke political and historical concerns. Drawing upon Eamon Slater's concept of the two romantic gazes, that of the landlord and the tourist, and his belief that the "native gaze" is typically left out of the representation of the Irish landscape, McLoone writes that "[i]n *December Bride*, by rearticulating the visual and narrative frames of Irish landscape and by relocating the people and the productive work they are engaged in, back onto the land, O'Sullivan comes close to establishing this native gaze" (1999:52). That kind of re-insertion is at the heart of *Korea*'s project. Black draws upon painterly compositions throughout the film, but in contrast to romantic apolitical representations of rural landscapes, he populates these compositions with historically over-determined characters. This strategy is also visible in the films of Pierre Perrault and Bob Quinn, but really it is closer to what Jean-Pierre Lefebvre attempts in *Les Fleurs sauvages*. As we saw in the chapter on Lefebvre, his use of the pastoral genre cuts both ways. *Les Fleurs sauvages* is drawing upon a certain kind of romantic nationalism in its visualisation of rural areas, but it is also populating these landscapes with unresolvable conflicts, such as the one between the hippy, Quiet-Revolution-formed potter Michèle, who has moved to the country with her kids and her second husband, and the decidedly non-enlightened, Duplessis-era-formed figure of her mother Simone, who was born in the country and party to an arranged marriage. Rural areas are invested with a similar sense of conflict and unending confusion in *Korea*, a film that may look like an intense, nicely photographed family drama, but which is actually a metaphorically constructed meditation on the wounds left by the Irish Civil War and what those wounds have to do with Ireland's troubled move towards modernity in the 1950s. The ghost of emigration to the United States, as a kind of left-over of the pre-modern Famine era, hangs heavy over that move. Pettitt writes that the key image of the film is a shot of a coffin draped with an American flag being rowed out by a young man and an Army officer to its watery grave (267); landscape, war, emigration, and death are all rolled into a metaphorically dense tableau.

A similar project lies at the heart of Black's next feature film, *Love and Rage*, which tries to recover the texture and ambiguity of colonial Ireland's relation to the landscape. This time the setting is Achill Island in 1896, and the narrative centres on a wealthy English woman, named Agnes MacDonnell, who owns a house there. She seems to have a soft spot for local culture, and is friendly with her Irish maid and bookkeeper. But a man named Linehan, through a series of deceptions, gets her bookkeeper fired and replaced by himself, eventually beginning an affair with Agnes. Their romance turns quite violent; after he beats her, she is left disfigured and he flees for the United States, where a request for extradition back to Ireland is denied because he, as a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, was able to convince American authorities that this was not a sordid affair gone violently wrong because of his apparent dementia but a case of him trying to drive out the coloniser, thus making him a political dissident. Throughout the film various English people refer to the island as "wild," a vision of Ireland's west that Black is trying to complicate in a way that is similar to what underwrites *December Bride* and *Korea*. Gibbons has written on how the west, particularly in the writings of J.M. Synge, has been portrayed as being opposed to the puritanism of romantic nationalism and instead seen as an escape from the conventions of aristocratic society, although one generally available only to the aristocracy. He writes that "the feudal ideal... imbued with aristocratic values of leisure and self-indulgence, conforms to an ethic of consumption or 'soft primitivism,' evoking [Ireland's west as] a world of recklessness and sensual abandon which stands as a direct antithesis to an ascetic ideology of duty, discipline, and control" (1996b:29). It is this representational tradition with which Black is engaging in *Love and Rage*, evoking images of wild islanders (like what we see in the shots of a travelling carnival, which open the film) but also complicating these kinds of *idées reçues* by showing images of maids at work, financial records being manipulated by locals hired to do such clerical tasks, and the raw, brutalising rage bubbling beneath the island's surface. None of this is part of Ireland's representational history, any more than bodies buried under concrete (the closing image of *Réjeanne Padovani*) are part of the representations of modernising Montréal that were prevalent during and right after the Quiet Revolution. Such imagery does, then, make a very pointed argument about representational traditions that have often hidden as much as they have visualised.

Furthermore, I recognise in the film's conclusion, which features a shot of a newspaper photo with Linehan shaking hands with Teddy Roosevelt whose headline calls him an "Irish Hero," and in the treatment of anti-colonial struggle generally, some of the cynicism of Arcand. Linehan is indeed a nominal member of the IRB, a violent revolutionary organisation whose members he thinks are at best deluded, at worst impossibly pretentious ("how is the Republic?" he sarcastically asks when they confront him to remind him of his oath; "Virtually existent" replies the leader of the cell, a response that elicits Linehan's acidic ridicule). On Achill Island at the dawn of the 20th century, violent revolution does seem to be in the air, but all that ever materialises is violence. And Black makes it clear that this has not much to do with the brutalising effect of colonial culture; he portrays Agnes MacDonnall as a basically liberal, if deluded coloniser who, in the final images of the film, seems to have built a loving, intimate relationship with her maid. Instead, the narrative explodes in violence because of the instability of a single man, a compelling figure in some ways but obviously unstable and brutal. This is a very different vision of the representation of colonial relations than might be expected from a work that pays such close attention to the political and cultural details of the colonial period (scenes with the IRB, shots of Agnes having her shoes taken off by her maid as soon as she walks into the house). In Black's moral universe, there is no room for romantic apologia for violence; a blow against the coloniser, in this case, is struck by a single person, acting incoherently and achieving nothing. Indeed, if *Love and Rage*'s cynicism about politics echoes that of *Réjeanne Padovani*'s, then its representation of the banality of violence is very close indeed to the hollow, burned-out figures of *La Maudite galette*.

That kind of violence is at the core of Arcand's *Gina*, which also exhibits Arcand's cynical, defeatist vision of politics, and which, like these Black films (and like *On est au coton*) invests non-urban space with the labour, politics and violence that such representations usually lack. The film centres around a young crew from the "Office National du Cinéma" who have gone to Louisville to make a film about textile factories. This is an obvious stand-in for Arcand's experience making *On est au coton*, and the film features some excerpts of the (then still-shelved) documentary, in addition to a number of shots that seem to be re-created from that film using *Gina*'s actors, all in black and white with a large border to simulate and exaggerate the 16mm aspect ratio. The role of the filmmaker is also played by Arcand's brother Gabriel.

When the crew arrives in town they meet a stripper named Gina, who has been sent there by a mafia boss from Montréal. Rounding this out are a band of lumpenproletariat snowmobilers, who become infatuated with Gina. By the end, the filmmakers have the plug pulled on their muckraking work (after the commissioner is said to have had a drink with the factory owner at the "Club Canadienne") and Gina has been raped by the snowmobilers. The *dénouement* comes when her mob bosses come up from Montréal to brutally beat to death each one of them, except for the one who did not actually rape Gina; driving a white Camaro, she chases him into a giant snow-blower, where he is shredded in a grotesque, proto-*Fargo* image. The filmmakers seem to get away unscathed; the closing images of the film are of them all working together on a cop movie.

Testa sees this ending, and the film as a whole, not as cynical but as sarcastic, writing that:

> ...no one in *Gina* achieves so exalted a state as a destiny, and no common fate awaits the characters. Instead, everyone endures an inevitable, indeed predictable end: Gina will be raped by the gang and will take her bloody revenge; the film crew will leave; the textile company, the workers and the townspeople will carry on just like before. Moreover, Arcand, as we will see, does not invest these endings with much commitment, but, rather, dispenses them in flourishes of sarcasm. (1986:207)

Testa could very well be talking about the Cathal Black films under discussion here, all of which have at their cores characters who slouch towards their defeat with little sense that it could be any other way, be it *Pigs*' Jimmy who ends up getting arrested and thrown out of the house, *Korea*'s Doyle continuing his visceral hatred for his Free-Stater neighbour and gradually losing his livelihood, or *Love and Rage*'s Agnes MacDonnell ending up disfigured and haunted, eventually shooting Linehan when he returns to Achill Island to try to make peace. And like the other Arcand films under discussion here, this sarcasm, or cynicism, does not immediately declare itself to be related to Québec politics or culture. But those links are there, in the form of the drink at the *Club Canadienne* that sinks the documentary about cotton mills, "O Canada" and "God Save the Queen" being audible on the TV as Gina is raped (a more explicit symbolism is hard to imagine), or the leader of the snowmobile gang bragging that his political connections got him a "local development grant" that will make their frozen rampages even more fun. The liberals were still in power in Québec, the Quiet Revolution was most definitely over and it was starting to look like very little had really changed.

Walz's final conclusion about these early Arcand features is that they "are films sharpened by anger but calmed by a kind of resignation." I have been arguing that the same mixture of anger and resignation informs Cathal Black's entire career. These narratives, which appear to be straightforward, perhaps even placeless tales, are in fact infused with local details that reveal them as interventions in broad cultural arguments, in much the same way that Arcand and Black's earlier, more explicitly political documentaries were. And these narrative films, while not steering as close to the realm of the avant garde as films like *Maeve* or *Les Ordres*, still evince formal and political eccentricities, all being quite visually gloomy and cynical about political struggle, much as the documentaries were. These feature-length narratives, then, show just how influenced by non-narrative forms Irish and Québec cinema are, and how this influence is much more multi-faceted than simply saying that both cinemas are often "realist" (read: grubby-looking) and therefore documentary-dependent.

Conclusion

So far, we have looked at non-mainstream forms of film making in Ireland and Québec. Jean-Pierre Lefebvre's aesthetically and politically independent films provide a road-map for the study of Irish and Quebec cinema, Pierre Perrault and Bob Quinn's films are fundamentally ethnographic, John T. Davies and Jaques Godbout's work is essayistic and neither explanatory nor narrative, and

Maeve and *Les Ordres* are closely linked with an idea of counter-cinema. And so in keeping with the argument put forward in the introduction, that cinema in Ireland and Québec is very rarely understandable in relation to Classical Hollywood, we have finally arrived at a more or less narrative cinema and can see that these films are still quite unconventional formally and unrelenting in terms of political analysis.

Indeed, all of these Black and Arcand films, regardless of generic identity, are fairly challenging to their viewer. That may not make them sound particularly inviting, but challenging character contributes greatly to my overall optimistic assessment of Québec and Irish cinema, and it makes the eventual growth of an internationalist, financially sustainable cinema, which I will discuss in the next chapter, seem entirely logical. These films, which were local in their orientation, as we see from their engagement with specific domestic political and cultural concerns, were not nationalist even in an insurgent, Third-Cinema kind of way, a path that would have been entirely logical given the anti-colonial rhetoric that had been adopted by both the Irish and Québec left. Instead, these films are critical, and sometimes downright defeatist, giving their viewers none of the easy comfort that is part of both Classical Hollywood and, all too often, part of the preaching-to-the-converted sector of Third Cinema. To my mind, that speaks to a cultural life in both Ireland and Québec that, for all its contradictions, was at any rate open to some serious introspection and self-criticism.

Notes:

1. Particularly poignant examples of this include the Argentine government's suppression of Fernando Solanas and Octavio Gettino's epic film *La hora de los hornos* (1968), the Chilean government's interruption of the production of Patricio Gúzman's epic *The Battle of Chile* (1975-79, started in Chile but finished in Cuba), and the Cuban government's confiscation of the film *P.M.* in 1961.

2. As Kristin Thompson has illustrated in her meticulous historical study *Exporting Entertainment*, Hollywood cinema has been globalised in a way that is quite consistent with contemporary understandings of the term for a very long time indeed, at least since the end of World War I.

3. These kinds of questions are dealt with in more detail in the chapter on Pat Murphy and Michel Brault. *On est au coton* shares with *Maeve* and *Les Ordres* a certain "in-betweenness" when it comes to the refusal of identification and narrative pleasure that was so important to theorists like Laura Mulvery and Claire Johnston. Indeed, in her "Women and Counter Cinema" pamphlet, Johnston points out how even documentaries are not immune to the kinds of repressive identification-based strategies that she castigates in narrative cinema. Johnston's work is certainly valuable in many ways, but *On est au coton*, like *Maeve* and *Les Ordres*, shows how its overall rejection of some basic elements of the cinematic form is often unproductive.

4. Part of this artificiality may stem from the involvement of Dermot Healy, an experimental novelist who co-wrote the screenplay with Black, and who recently starred in Nichola Bruce's non-narrative film *I Could Read the Sky* (1999).

5. It is quite ironic that RTÉ of all national broadcasters should be faced with this kind of quandary, since its very foundation is so intertwined with the Vatican itself. Robert Savage has written on just how involved the Holy See was in the establishment of RTÉ, with two Cardinals, Msr. George Roche and Msr. Andrea Deskur being dispatched to Dublin by Pope Pius XII to do what they could to support its establishment. Savage reproduces the following memo from Sean MacEntee to Éamonn de Valera, at that time Taoiseach, in his history of Irish television:

   > The Holy Father had at once expressed great interest in the matter and subsequently had arranged that Monsignor Roche should come to Dublin, accompanied by Monsignor Deskur... Having put their submission to the Television Commission, Monsignor Roche stated that they had been charged to express informally the great personal interest which His Holiness had in the matter, because of the great service which he believed a television service under the auspices of the Irish Government could render in combatting irreligion and materialism. (154)

6. "Reithian" refers to John Reith, first head of the BBC who, very much like the first head of the NFB/ONF John Grierson, advocated an educational, non-commercial and nation-building vision for the mass media.

7. The terms "Ulster" and "Northern Ireland" are often used interchangeably; they are not the same entity. The province of Ulster, like all four of Ireland's provinces mediaeval in origin, has nine counties: Down, Armagh, Antrim, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Derry, Donegal, Monaghan and Cavan. The UK province of Northern Ireland has *six* counties; Donegal, Monaghan and Cavan, owing to their large numbers of Catholics, were left out of the partition.

Chapter Six:

Neil Jordan and Denys Arcand's Later Films, and the Search for an International Narrative Cinema

Neither Québec nor Ireland ever developed a fully commercial cinema that can compete on local screens with Hollywood offerings. Both places have seen some commercial film making, but the situation there is on a different level from fully developed, non-Hollywood commercial cinemas such as we see in India, Egypt or Mexico. I discussed in the last chapter the ways that Québec's and Ireland's cinema has seen the emergence of narrative, semi-commercial filmmakers, filmmakers with documentary training. These films are closer to conventional cinema than the work under discussion in the first section, but their liberties with narrative form and their linkage to political and cultural debates ensured that they were not really circulate-able internationally. There are other filmmakers, though, whose work comes closer to this mark, being positioned between the global and the local, and coming closer than what we saw in the last chapter to forming an internationalised, commercial cinema in both Québec and Ireland.

Neil Jordan and the recent incarnation of Denys Arcand are good examples of filmmakers who are precariously balanced between the globalised and the local. Both filmmakers have engaged closely with the political situation of their home countries, but their films *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* and *The Crying Game*, are works in which viewers could ignore political nuance and come to a coherent reading. Interestingly, their later films, *Michael Collins* and *Jésus de Montréal*, engage more closely with political arguments, and do not seem to have suffered much in terms of international exhibition for that engagement (all four have secured US and UK theatrical releases, something very rarely achieved by films from either Ireland or Québec; *none* of the films I have discussed so far were ever released theatrically in the United States or the UK). These four films, then, offer an interesting study in the effects of integration into a globalised film marketplace. Political specifics are always present *and* absent in these films, realist form is maintained even when it seems to be subverted. Because of these factors, Arcand and Jordan are the auteurs of the future, stuck between an older idea of a "New Wave" and a contemporary, globalised and seemingly open-minded view of an international Hollywood cinema.[1]

I. *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* and *The Crying Game*

Both Arcand and Jordan made films in the 1970s and 80s that brought them relatively wide acclaim. Arcand's *Réjeanne Padovani* (1973) won the Jury Prize at Cannes and enjoyed a modest domestic release, and Jordan's *Angel* (1982), set in civil-war-torn Northern Ireland, was one of the UK's Channel 4's first productions and was quite widely seen in Europe and North America. But the kind of international exposure that these films received really pales in comparison to their directors' "breakout" films, *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* (1986) and *The Crying Game* (1993). These films were released at a time when Québec and Irish cinema were at the height of their international exposure (the 1980s and 90s, respectively), and seemed to encapsulate a lot of the themes that seemed to define their national cinemas. But even though they are closely engaged with political issues, they can also be coherently read outside of these concerns. Indeed, writing about *The Crying Game*, Conor McCarthy asserts that:

> The film utilises the geographical divide between Ireland and England, it presupposes their political and economic interconnection, but it evacuates this interconnection of any historical or political content. The film is profoundly uninterested in *why* Jody is serving in Northern Ireland, in why Fergus is fighting him, in *why* it is in fact entirely plausible for Fergus to take refuge in the heartland of his "enemy." Behind each of these narrative moves or geographic inscriptions lies a massive complex history of conquest, resistance, territorial acquisition, economic interpretation and dependence, decolonisation, unemployment and impoverishment, migration and ghettoisation. All of this is stripped away, leaving us with a gratifying image of the "good terrorist" who finds the space for love and the expression of his true humanity in England.
> (180, emphases his)

This is the core of my argument about both *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* and *The Crying Game*. In varying degrees, these films evacuate their narratives of political or social detail, even though they still try to give their viewers some sense of place. Less so than the international successes that follow them, these first widely circulated films from Jordan and Arcand are somewhat contradictory, full of engagement with political arguments, but not so full as to restrict their entry into a globalised cinematic marketplace.

Pierre Vérroneau has written that "si les années soixante-dix furent celles de Carle, les années quatre-vent sont dominées par Arcand" (1996:116) [if the 60s belonged to [Gilles] Carle, then the 80s were dominated by Arcand]. This was the decade when three Québec films won major prizes at Cannes; two of them were by Arcand (Jean-Pierre Lefebvre's *Les Fleurs sauvages* [1982] and *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* both won the Critic's Prize, and Arcand's *Jésus de Montréal* [1989] was awarded a special prize for artistic accomplishment). Although Arcand had started his career as a political documentarian, making work even more obscure in subject matter than what we saw in the last chapter (such as

Québec: Duplessis et après [1972], a stinging comparison of the 1936 and 1970 Québec elections, or *Le Confort et l'indifférence* (1981), a bitter, formally innovative and politically detailed examination of the failed 1980 referendum on sovereignty), his career is marked by a slow shift towards straightforward, accessible narratives, even if that shift had some interesting digressions (such as those documentaries, or odder narrative work like *Gina*, as we saw in the last chapter). *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* is the full realisation of this steady move towards the centre. These films both require some knowledge of Québec, but are much more at home with convention than the more difficult *On est au coton* or *La maudite galette*, or even *Gina*.

Neil Jordan, along with Jim Sheridan, dominated Irish film of the 1990s in a very similar way. Jordan did begin on the independent fringes of Ireland's cinema, writing the screenplay for the Joe-Comerford-directed *Traveller* (1981), although he was famously unhappy with the result.[2] But his stay in what he clearly viewed as cinematic purgatory was brief; by 1984 he had been taken under the wing of John Boorman[3] and finished the relatively glossy feature *Angel,* and he soon after left Ireland, first for England to make *Mona Lisa* and eventually for Hollywood, where he made *In the Company of Wolves* (1984) and relatively unsuccessful features such as *High Spirits* (1988), and *We're No Angels* (1989). As *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* and *Jésus de Montréal* came to almost embody Québec's national cinema, so has *The Crying Game*, even more so than *Michael Collins*, come to embody the re-born, internationalised Irish cinema. As McCarthy recalls, "on the morning that Neil Jordan's Oscar for *The Crying Game* was announced, the government revealed that the film board (Bord Scannán) was being resurrected, with an annual budget of £2.5 million" (16). For a then-embattled Irish cinema, the international success (and especially the American success, which so many people think to be the same thing) of *The Crying Game* seemed to promise the recognition (both at home and abroad) and, most importantly, financial stability, of which advocates of Irish cinema had long dreamed.

It would be a misrepresentation, though, to portray these films as completely detached from their local culture. As with *Jésus de Montréal*, there is a very palatable sense that *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* is engaging with the aftermath of the Quiet Revolution, and as with *Michael Collins* (and the work of Cathal Black), *The Crying Game* is clearly wrestling with the aftermath of Revisionism and the confusion of "The Troubles." Let's begin, then, by examining the ways that these films are engaged with complex arguments that are not entirely assimilable to a globalised or globalising film culture.

That almost every character in *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* is an early-middle-aged intellectual gives the film an all-but-explicit link to the Quiet Revolution and its political and cultural aftermath. Arcand's ensemble is sophisticated, highly educated, sensually aware, and its members are almost all of just the right age to have became adults during the period when Québec transformed from a culture that was culturally conservative, sexually repressive and to a great extent anti-intellectual into a cosmopolitan, modernised society. Indeed, that the narrative is structured around the men cooking a gourmet meal and the women exercising and sauna-ing is an equally self-conscious evocation of all that had changed after the 1960s. The Québec to which they belong is no longer a rigid, puritanical society, but instead a full participant in the North American culture of consumption and care of the body; Bill Marshall uses the term "post traditional" to explain the film's cultural climate (290). Indeed, while I will argue that *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* has been mostly evacuated of political significance, there is an argument to be made that Québec audiences would recognise these characters as symbols of a societal shift that is now being re-evaluated. A previous generation of smart young men would have had little outlet other than the seminary; the new generation of such men are represented by Rémy, Pierre and Claude, who got doctorates in the United States and are now sex-obsessed college professors. A previous generation of smart young women would have had little outlet other than becoming schoolteachers; the new generation of such women are here represented by Diane and Dominique, two opposite ends of the extreme, having become, respectively, a professionally ambitious but frustrated single mother and a lonely but highly successful intellectual (Dominique is the chair of the history department where Rémy and Pierre work, and has just written a controversial, widely read book on happiness throughout history).

The gap between these characters and the traditional family of the pre-Quiet revolution period is self-consciously enormous, and the fact that these characters are mostly defined by self-absorption and neuroses could be seen as a satirical jab at the way that the baby boomers in Québec have evolved. While *The*

Big Chill (Lawrence Kasdan, 1983) is an obvious and oft-cited American parallel with this narrative of hippie disillusionment, Oliver Stone's *Wall Street* (1987) also makes for an interesting point of contact. Stone caricatures the baby-boom generation in the form of a vapid young Wall Street broker, who is a clear contrast to his father, who is a mechanic at a small airline and influential in his union. While there is an argument to be made that this film downloads economic and political matters onto a narrative that is more about personal gratification than actual political or economic conditions (an argument I will make about *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*), the film does take on extra significance for those who understand such specifically American (*étatsunisien*) conditions such as the weakening of unions and the disappearance both of well-paying blue-collar jobs and the post-WWII idealism about the rise from the working to the middle class. Similarly, *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* would have an extra bite for those who are familiar with Québec's societal evolution since 1960; there are stereotypes to recognise, in-jokes to be enjoyed. But as we will see with *The Crying Game* (which also benefits from some knowledge of the Irish troubles, although not too much knowledge), that does not mean that the film is offering any analysis or insight into these societal evolution, that it is meaningfully engaged with the political and cultural specificity that it invokes.

In addition to being a post-Quiet Revolution film (as are, one could argue, almost all of Arcand's films, even some of the ones made during the Quiet Revolution itself), *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* also bears the mark of the failed 1980 referendum on Québec independence. Heinz Weinmann writes of this aspect of the film that Arcand, "après une analyse à chaud du referendum dans *Le Confort et l'indifférence* (1981), se livre dans ce film à une autopsie minutieuse, à une psychanalyse de la situation mentale postréférendaire, en disséquant la vie de sept universitaires montréalais" (147) [Arcand, "after an on the spot analysis of the referendum in *Le Confort et l'indifférence*, turns in this film towards a minute autopsy, to a psychoanalysis of the post-referendum mental situation, by dissecting the lives of seven Montréal professors"]. This analysis is also put forward by essayist Jean Larose, who writes that it is "un film terriblement post-référendaire, un film sur la nudité de la vie intellectuelle dans un société qui *croit* qu'elle ne croit plus à rien" (15, emphasis his) [a terribly post-referendum film, a film on the nakedness of intellectual life in a society that *believes* it no longer believes in anything].

Indeed, to get back to the *Wall Street* comparison, some commentators have argued that the period following the 1980 referendum marked a departure not only from politics but from intellectual life in general. Just as in the United States the apolitical materialism that we see reflected in Wall Street was a very different matter than the previous period of stock-market speculation and industrial growth during the "roaring 20s," I would argue that the apoliticism that we see in *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* is very different from an earlier generation of such indifference: say, that born of the repressive social climate and economic stratification of the 1930s. Ginette Paris writes of this period that "[d]ans les années 1970 à 1980, l'indépendance était une idée et une passion d'intellectuels et d'artistes.... Mais depuis l'échec référendaire, une autre figure de héros a émergé : la personne qui réussit en affaires" (49) [in the 70s and 80s, independence was an idea and a passion of intellectuals and artists.... But since the failure of the referendum, another hero figure has emerged: the successful businessperson]. The transformation of activists into businessmen is also a central theme of *The Big Chill*; the crucial difference is that Kasdan seems to revel in this transformation while Arcand seems depressed by it. In 1930s Québec there was, of course, not much of a coherent intellectual or artistic community that could collectively struggle for change and then collectively withdraw from that struggle when that change was defeated. But in the 1980s, the newly-formed intellectual sector, following the death of one of its dreams, seemed to be moving towards the margins of society, having to make room in the popular imagination for people, as Paris writes, "qui vend[ent] à Toronto" (49) [who sell in Toronto]. While it seems clear that these intellectuals are not marginalised in the same way as, say, Perrault's islanders, *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* is very much about their (partially self-initiated) withdrawal, as a group, from politics. Paris' image of the increased centrality of those *qui vendent à Toronto* is part of this, so I do think it is reasonable to speak of the less and less central role of intellectuals in the life of the nation. What drives the film's satire is precisely the portrait of an élite sector of society that seems to be withdrawing from its collective responsibilities.

Other commentators have argued that *Le Declin de l'empire américain* is centrally about Québec's collective failure to metaphorically move out of their parent's Ottawa basement and assume the adult responsibilities of nationhood.

Pierre Migneault writes of the failure of the referendum that "[o]n a de la difficulté à assumer notre paternité, comme nos propres pères" (40) [we have some difficulty assuming our parenthood, like our own fathers]. These analyses were both offered as part of a 1988 conference on "Le syndrome postréférendaire," which read the failure of the 1980 referendum in explicitly psychological terms. But these two hallmarks of this "syndrome"are indeed present in *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*, and present in a way that is similar to what we also saw in Jean-Pierre Lefebvre's *Les Fleurs sauvages*. Politics are understood here not in terms of engagement of intellectuals (the profs of *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*) and artists (the potter and photographer couple of *Les Fleurs sauvages*) but in terms of retreat, in both cases to the Eastern Townships. Lefebvre, however, shows, as he also did in *Mon amie Pierette*, that the Townships are in fact the repository of a complex politics and history, embodied in the figure of Michèle's conservative mother Simone or Pierette's conservative parents; for Arcand it's just somewhere for bored intellectuals to repair to on the weekends.

But both films also see this post-referendum condition in familial terms. For Lefebvre, the inability of Michèle to form an understanding relationship with her mother is a recurring subtext and easy to read in terms of her being unwilling to accept that adulthood and parenthood are, not unlike political transformation, imperfect processes that require compromise. And Arcand's intellectuals have, in effect, given up the long, slow and messy struggle of politics and ideas for a life of material, professional or sensual plenty. They also have unsatisfying relationships: Rémy is a philanderer, Pierre is a romantic who can't find a mate, Diane is involved with a man with whom she admits she has no future, and both Dominique and Claude are dating students who are young enough to be their kids, relationships that are clearly meant as a satirical jab at their mid-life crises. So, like Arcand's early work, *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* is very defeatist indeed about the way that those empowered by the Quiet Revolution have actually fulfilled the responsibilities that come with that kind of awakening.

The Crying Game also gives the sense that political struggle has not lived up to its radical promises, being defined by little more than perpetual violence and alienation. Stephen Rea's character Fergus is a clear vision of such exhaustion; an IRA man, he clearly finds the killing he is called to do distasteful, and is also approaching middle age and notably lacking in youthful idealism about the struggle against the British. Much the same is true of Jude, the film's femme fatale, who, although defined by a ruthless bloodlust, does not seem especially political. Indeed, Aspasia Kotsopoulos and Josephine Mills sum her up nicely by writing that "the film never expresses that Jude is politically active – doing her job, so to speak, because she believes in the goals of the IRA... Like her predecessor, Mildred Pierce, Jude dares to seek an identity outside the traditional confines of home and family – but in a career of terrorism rather than restauranteurship" (16). I will argue shortly that this lack of political intentionality is characteristic of *The Crying Game*'s disinterest in politics and focus on the generic conventions of the Hollywood thriller, a state of affairs that I will also argue is central to *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*. But it is also possible to view this lack of politics as Jordan wrestling with the cultural condition of Northern Ireland in the early 1990s. It is important to remember that *The Crying Game* is set and was released *before* the first IRA cease-fire. Violence in both London and Northern Ireland had been sporadic but had been going on for a long time indeed. There was a sense in more pessimistic quarters that the "Northern Problem" was unsolvable, that the entire province, and to a certain extent London, was condemned to an eternity of low-level warfare over political questions that were becoming increasingly meaningless in the face of globalisation and European unification. Taken in this light, the lack of specific political engagement with Northern Ireland is actually quite reflexive of a culture that had simply lost the sense that violent struggle could have any meaning other than anxiety.

But these kinds of arguments are, to say the least, optimistic, especially in the case of *The Crying Game*. For while there is a sense that the film is genuinely reflective of a bona fide cultural condition, a more coherent argument would be that the film in fact represses political detail in a way that is entirely consistent with the demands of realist form and Hollywood Cinema. "Narrative resolution can work to transcend the social conflict represented in the film, often by displacing it onto the individual (the hero torn between duty and personal urges), the couple (the romance-plot taking precedence over the pretext-action), the family, or the communal good" writes David Bordwell in his seminal study (co-authored with Kristin Thompson and Janet Staiger) *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* (82).[4] This neat summary of Classical Hollywood's tendency towards ideological indifference or suppression reads as though it was written specifically about *The Crying Game*. That film does indeed have a hero, Fergus, torn between duty – to the IRA and, nominally, driving the British military out of Ireland – and personal urges – his sense of attachment to a British solider and, as a result of that, his love for that soldier's lover, Dil. Fergus and Dil, then, form a couple, the description and struggles of which do indeed take precedence over the pretext for their connection, a tragic mishap stemming from Irish politics. There is even something of a family dynamic and invocation of the common good – the IRA spider-woman Jude tracks Fergus down in London and demands that he prove his loyalty to the IRA "family" which he has tried to leave, and also demands that he strike a blow for the collective good of Northern Ireland (at least that's how she seems to think of it). What that "good" would constitute, however, is never really spelled out.

Le Déclin de l'empire américain, while possessed of a somewhat more de-centred narrative than *The Crying Game*, also downloads what are essentially political matters into the realm of the personal, specifically the sexual. Arguing that questions of gender dominate the narrative of *The Crying Game*, Kristin Handler writes that "[t]he film could thus be said to substitute a 'libidinal politics' for racial and national politics" (32). There is not much racial/ethnic discourse in *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*. There is a scene where Rémy says he is nervous about having sex with Asians because he thinks they're always going to steal his money to take to their sick little brother and another where he recalls going to a brothel on St-Laurent with an African colleague. These sequences do not give the film direction, though, they only reinforce the film's well-established theme of how obsessed with sex these intellectuals are; they have very little interest in other cultures as such. This is especially interesting in light of Montréal's status as a multicultural city; none of the characters have any contact with any non-white Québécoises outside of their students or their visiting colleagues, and even then it's couched only in terms of sex. This, of course, could be seen as something of a dig at the way that Québec has evolved: all that fuss about building a cosmopolitan, multicultural city, and all these characters can see is more opportunities for sexual exploration and frustration. Then again, it could also be seen as another way of emphasising how totally absorbed in the world of academia, to the exclusion of any other world-views at all, these characters are.

The film's politics are, like those of *The Crying Game*, overwhelmingly libidinal. Indeed, the sexual frustrations, excesses and infidelities of *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*'s characters have become something of an obsession for them, except for the clueless, somewhat pathetic Louise, wife of the philandering Rémy. Intellectual matters as such are at the fringes of their conversations. Clearly this obsession with sex is meant to set the mood of the eighties: politics, social transformation, and intellectual life have all been forgotten, in favour of an overwhelming, self-absorbed sensuality. Another way of putting it would be that these films are obsessively focussed on the body. Maria Pragmaggiore writes that "[g]iven contemporary debates about the efficacy and limits of identity politics, it is not surprising that the film's postmodern obsession with the terrain of the body appears to eclipse the long-standing and bloody dispute regarding geographical territory and political autonomy" (85). Heinz Weinmann, similarly, writes of a "«culture physique »... Culture barbare, donc anticulture puisque acéphale, produisant des corps sans tête" (152) [a "physical culture" ... A barbaric culture, and so an anti-culture, since it brutally produces a body without a head]. Pragmaggiore is writing about *The Crying Game* and Weinmann about *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*, but it seems to me that their statements are almost interchangeable. The sexual repression and bodily loathing of traditional Catholicism in Québec (and, for that matter, Ireland) have been banished. But in the case of both these films, the return of bodily concerns is not a signifier of a postmodern, radical re-conceptualisation of political concerns, as we see in so much theoretical work surrounding "the body." It is a signal of the vanishing of such concerns.

I would acknowledge that there is a certain radicalism to the sexual politics of *The Crying Game* (Fergus learns to love, regardless of gender, which he learns is slippery) and to the social politics of *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* (Arcand is trying to offer a critique of his society's sages, those responsible for its scared post-1960 evolution). But I do not think that *The Crying Game* is an example of sexual radicalism, any more than I think that *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* is a cry for sexual restraint on the part of intellectuals. Instead, both Jordan and Arcand are using bodily imagery to avoid substantive engagement with political matters. I do not think that this is a case of Arcand and Jordan showing political disinterest as a means of critiquing it; I will explain why whatever political critiques they offer are, to my mind, so shallow as to be irrelevant. And furthermore, political dis-engagement is integrated into their films' narratives; Fergus learns that politics aren't so important after all, and Arcand's Montréalers learn that all the political idealism of their youth is just so much foolish chatter that they were unable to follow through on. Politics are invoked by Jordan and Arcand only to be systematically, purposefully evacuated from their narratives, shown to be either the delusions of a self-important band of slobs (*Le Déclin*) or foolish and squalid in comparison to learning to love someone regardless of their gender (*Crying Game*). Whatever political radicalness might be discernible in these films is entirely displaced by their pronounced indifference to the very socio-political questions that their own narratives invoke and then fail to engage.

And there is, of course, a pronounced sense of misanthropy throughout *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* (one that is entirely consistent with the cynical outlook of Arcand's entire body of work), a sense that is absent from *The Crying Game* and that suggests that Arcand's portrayal of apoliticism is present in the narrative because the indulgence that defines this generation being critically, and perhaps politically, satirised. And Arcand does seem to strongly dislike these characters, almost always showing them at their most self-absorbed and annoying. But this misanthropy is never marshalled into a coherent critique, or for that matter a fully coherent portrayal of the cultural condition of Québec in the 1980s, any more than *The Crying Game*'s tale of redemption amounts to a coherent analysis of Northern Ireland's violence. It's tempting to think of *Le Déclin de l'empire americain* as a continuation of the critique that Arcand began with his blisteringly satirical documentary *Le Confort et l'indifférence* (1981). But that documentary, while taking nasty, sometimes cheap shots at Québec materialism and self-absorption like what we see in *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* (his wandering through a Montréal RV show provides a particularly good example), was grounded in a careful, detailed explanation of the political details of Québec leading up to the referendum (some of it done through archive footage, some of it done through the narration of Jean-Pierre Ronfard, who plays Machivalli sitting in a Montréal office building). There's no question that those shots of the RV show are part of a political critique, but it is just as clear that taken by themselves, without the "detail work" that accounts for most of *Le Confort et l'indifférence*, it would be difficult to see them as anything except sneering mockery. And finally, *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* is like a film comprised only of those shots of the RV show, without any images of Machiavelli or René Levesque.

I would acknowledge, though, that unlike *The Crying Game*, *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* is using this emphasis on sex over politics as such to make some links to parts of Québec's shifting norms of sex and gender. The character Diane, for instance, is an exploited sessional lecturer and Radio-Canada freelancer, obviously bitter about the privileges accorded to her tenured male friends, Rémy, Pierre and Claude. But as Denise Pérusse points out (76), the film also establishes her as a masochist. She tells her friends that she likes her new boyfriend Mario because he enjoys rough, humiliating sex, the marks of which her friends see on her back as they change in the locker room. This is, for her, something of a guilty pleasure; she tells the other women that ordinarily this sort of thing wouldn't appeal to her at all, but that for some reason she is really turned on by the humiliation, that she had never before understood the power of the victim. When he appears at the dinner party, he embarrasses her by his general coarseness and un-couthness (he speaks *joual*, gripes about how everyone is talking too much, and makes fun of the trout pie the men have prepared and the imported beer they offer him); Diane is clearly *not* turned on by this. Her talk about "the power of the victim" and the pleasure of masochistic sex, then, seem to me not a statement about the loosening of puritan restrictions on sexual expression, but a metaphorical jibe about how this generation of Québec intellectuals is no longer sure about how to avoid being kept down by Canada, and so has now decided to try to enjoy it instead.

Larose argues that Louise, wife of Rémy, is a "maman Plouffe" figure (10), the long-suffering wife/mother archetype of pre-Quiet Revolution Québec literature; Diane has a similar link; she is a kind of updated *La Petite Aurore, l'enfant martyre*. Petite Aurore is the title character of 1951 Québec film by Jean-Yves Bigras whose main narrative focusses on the ridiculous amount of suffering inflicted upon an innocent girl at the hands of an evil stepmother. The loving mother who dies too young is replaced here by different object of unrealised love/signifiers of loss, an unseen ex-husband who kept Diane out of the professional world while they lived in the country and raised kids. In *Le Déclin*, the macho, leather-clad tough-guy replaces the evil stepmother a signifier of the replacement of love with force. But what remains is the anxiety about the breakdown of the traditional family being taken out on the body of an all-too-willing female. Christine Tremblay-Daviault's assessment of that film's narrative path is almost eerie in how it could be said to apply to this strand of *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*, even evoking the obsessive talking that these intellectuals do throughout the film: "[a]u cœur de cette misère oppressive, la libération par la parole constitue en soi une menace de dégradation et, littéralement, de mutilation" (214) [at the heart of this oppressive misery, the liberation by speech constitutes in itself a menace of degradation and, literally, of mutilation] (214). *Petite Aurore*, though, leaves out the same crucial piece of the puzzle that *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* does: causality. Why in traditional Québec society must girls be seen as submissive (to good or ill effect) to a mother figure? Why in "post-traditional" Québec society are divorced women seen as willingly downtrodden? Arcand, like Bigras before him, is silent on such matters.

John Hill has argued that such a lack of causality is also a hallmark of the genre of the "Troubles Film," a genre which tends towards representations typical of what Tom Nairn has identified, in *The Break-Up of Britain*, as the "myth of atavism." While Hill draws some distinction between British and American representations of the war in Northern Ireland, his overall conclusion is that "the dominant conventions of not only the British, but also American, cinema are by their nature inimical to social and political explanations of *any* human actions" (1987:150). Hill moves through decades of production about Northern Ireland, mostly from Britain and the United States, finally arriving at the then-contemporary *Cal* by Pat O'Connor and *Angel*, Jordan's first film as a director. These two films marked the beginnings of cinema made about Ireland by Irish directors, and so they are arguably predecessors of *The Crying Game*; also, like *The Crying Game*, they were made with heavy British and American participation. What has actually happened in all of these films, though, is not a turn to a non-American or non-British stylistic pattern, but instead a reversion to the generic demands of the crime film and especially the *film noir* (a form that most commentators on *The Crying Game* invoke at one point or another), a form that is primarily American but which also has a significant British cycle.[5]

The Crying Game is very self-conscious about its status as *film noir*; indeed, it is so self-conscious about its status as to be closer to neo-noir, a cycle of films that emerges in the 1980s and uses the conventions of noir as a stylistic flourish while incorporating none of the form's ideological instability and occasional political hysteria (*Stormy Monday* [Mike Figgis, 1988], *Red Rock West* [John Dahl, 1992] or *Rounders* [Dahl, 1998] are good examples). Jude is quite an exact reproduction of the *femme fatale*, a super-sexual working woman who is (once she gets out of Northern Ireland, where she is forced to act as a homebody who makes tea for terrorists) well dressed, smokes, and tries to drag a basically honest guy (reformed terrorist Fergus) into her amoral world of violence and sensuality. The torch songs sung by Dil are obvious pointers to films of the 1940s and 50s. This is re-enforced by the dark, fragmented lighting schema that predominate when Dil and Fergus meet, a visual feel recalled in the scenes with Jude. Visual and thematic generic conventions, then, are followed quite deliberately; it hardly seems a surprise that there is little narrative space left for explanation of a complex political situation. Although he is writing about the (film-noir-ish, slightly pre-neo-noir) IRA film *Hennessey* (1975), Hill could also be describing *The Crying Game* when he laments that "[t]he inevitable result is that the events in Northern Ireland are employed as no more than a coathanger for the film's tale of individual revenge" (173). While the original cycle of *film noir* was such a marginal form (generally produced on a low budget on the edge of the Hollywood system) that it was not unusual for political considerations to seep into the narrative (sometimes in the form of liberal concern about the fate of the underclass or the madness of the Cold War, sometimes in the form of reactionary hysteria about the decadent city and the slimy, shifty, and vaguely foreign characters that live and prey there), neo-noir is generally produced in a more explicitly commercial framework and tends to be drained of the sometimes nasty edginess of the original work, using noir's visual style as a decoration of a straightforward, realist narrative.

Arcand is also using a fairly superficial evocation of politics and cultural clash to hang a tale of individual repression and disloyalty. This is particularly visible through his use of the character Mario, who has been read in exactly opposing terms by critics writing in French and English. Weinmann writes of Mario that "Mario est le « gars d'icitte, » qui parle « joual », caricature d'un Québec d'antan « simple », « enfantin », qui va droit au but, qui agit parce que « y a pas de problèmes ». Caricature d'un Québec « bandant » plutôt qu'en « débandade » comme celui des huit intellectuels" (168) ["Mario is 'local guy,' who speaks 'joual,' a caricature of the Québec of yesterday, 'simple,' 'childlike,' who gets right to the point, who acts like 'it's no big deal.' He is a caricature of a

Québec with an erection, instead of the flaccid Québec of these eight intellectuals"]. Adrien van den Houven, on the other hand, sees Mario as a "Québécois lite," writing (in a way that does not exactly uphold the highest standards of racial or gender sensitivity) that "Mario, the latest descendent of the *coureurs de bois* and of François Paradis, has traded in his snowshoes, his fur skins, his hard liquor and his Indian maidens for a Jeep, a leather jacket, a Molson, and a dark-eyed frustrated University lecturer" (152). Is Mario supposed to be a signifier of the repressed, pre-modern Québec, or is he meant to further emphasise the degree to which Québec culture has been tamed and vulgarised? In the end it does not matter, even if he does shore up his symbol-of-Québec credentials at the very end of the film by giving Diane a copy of Michel Brunet's nationalist history *Notre passé, le présent et nous*. Whatever cultural connotation he may carry – and this connotation is, I believe, incoherent – Mario's place in the narrative is to drive the final nail into the coffin of these intellectuals' self-absorption. Their inability to deal with him certainly has resonance from the perspective of Québec culture, but the extreme awkwardness of the sequence where he appears certainly has the effect of overloading, for most viewers, political considerations.

My overall argument about this film, then, is that it is while there are elements of Québec specificity in its narrative, its narrative does not depend on those elements to be understood; they are evoked in a more or less superficial way. While I do not want to go very deep into the question of how the film was received outside of Canada or Québec, Peter Wilkins has (in a substantial article on just that question) pointed to the large number of US critics who spend most of their time trying to figure out the title (is the "Empire" the United States? All of North America? etc.) or comparing the film to *The Big Chill*.[6] I think that his conclusion that "US critics might have been less confused by both the geopolitics and sexual politics of the film had they thought about them in a more integrated way" (123), while a little bit beside my point (since this is not an analysis of the film's reception) is relevant to my arguments in this chapter. That is, after all, the point that I am trying to make about politics and locality in *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* (and, for that matter, in *The Crying Game*); geopolitical or sexual politics, or politics of any kind, are precisely *not* integrated with the film's narrative about interpersonal matters. Politics are invoked (the legacy of the Quiet Revolution is being satirised, however shallowly), but they are not central to the narrative; as Bordwell describes and Hill decries, they are seen only through a series of individual lenses, with very little sense of a collective, national or cultural reality. This aspect of the film is often framed in "universal vs. local" terms. Wilkins writes that "[t]he film locates itself between its Québec/Canada setting and some kind of universal human condition" (119). Other critics put it in a way that sees the escape from detail as a virtue. Janice Pallister writes in her book-length survey that *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* "is no longer in the 'nationalistic' tradition of the more parochial films of Québec we have been looking at in the course of this study, films such as *Les Plouffes*, *Maria Chapdelaine*, even *Mon Oncle Antoine*" (258-59). John Harkness writes in the British film monthly *Sight and Sound* that "[i]n the early part of his career, Arcand was a provincial. His films were about and largely of interest to Québec" (238), and therefore, for Harkness, limited. I would argue, though, that a de-emphasis of political realities has the effect of making the film's treatment of complex cultural situations superficial.

This is also close to Hill's overall argument about the relation between British/American representations of "The Troubles" and Irish representations. He writes that "...[a]s with so many British films before them, *Angel* and *Cal* have proved unequal to the challenge of their subject matter and, as a result, have obscured, as much as they have illuminated, the issues with which they have dealt" (1987:184). Much the same could be said about the relationship between *Angel* and *The Crying Game.* Indeed the question of obscuring the subject matter raised, or rather trivialising that subject matter, is a recurring theme in a wide variety of critical discourse around the film. Joe Cleary echoes this imagery of disappearance and distortion in his article in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, writing that "[i]f the film is read in terms of power rather than identity, however, it becomes clear that it actually renders invisible the structures of power rather than constitute the minorities it features. The film must be considered superficial, if not reactionary, therefore, by any standard of the political that is measured in terms of commitment to social change" (263), although its re-vising of gender politics could (if looked at in complete isolation from the rest of the film) be seen as radical. Writing in the left-wing American film journal *Jump Cut*, Kotsopoulos and Mills argue that "[t]he film provides no complex, committed exploration of politics or systematic racism" (20). Robert Payne, also writing in *Jump Cut*, asserts that "it may be said that the film *trivializes* the issues it raises as much as it illuminates them" (11, emphasis mine). Frann Michel, writing in *Cineaste* (once a kind of sister-journal to *Jump Cut*) argues that "the film's presentation of the IRA becomes increasingly unsympathetic, and, ultimately, *trivializing*" (32, emphasis mine). Writing in *Sight and Sound*, Jonathan Romney points out that "[t]here is a real sense in which the film is open to accusations of *triviality* in presenting sexual, racial and political differences as almost interchangeable versions of otherness" (40, emphasis mine). Lloyd takes the film to task for its sloppiness with detail (1999:64-65). This kind of raw carelessness encompasses a number of details. Neither the IRA nor any paramilitary organisation in Northern Ireland are in the practice of taking hostages or of staging suicide missions. Off-duty troops in Northern Ireland are as a matter of policy confined to barracks and so unavailable to be seduced by IRA spider-women, as Jody is by Jude. Northern Ireland has been a proving ground for "low intensity operations"and has not been the sight of intense, tank-led invasions such as we see the visceral scene where Jody is killed among many large explosions.

This convergence of opinion across a fairly wide range of publications (from the unambiguously journalistic *Sight and Sound* to the prestigious academic review *South Atlantic Quarterly*) is a considerable contrast to the way that the film is described in the British Film Institute's monograph on it. Indeed, the way that Jane Giles, author of that monograph, describes the film, provides an excellent example of what Robert Ray has called "a certain tendency of the Hollywood cinema," which is, to put it in a single phrase, "the avoidance of choice" (69). Writing about the way that Classical Hollywood systematically refuses *actual* political commitment, Ray writes that "[e]ven the rare movies purporting to deal with general economic or political issues... slid inevitably into dramatizations of individual solutions... repeatedly, these movies raised, and then appeared to solve, problems associated with the troubling incompatibility of American myths" (57). It is this *appearance* of political content by which Giles seems to be taken in, along with the film's refusal to engage with the contradictory nature of British and Irish myths (such as the reconciliation of violence with the maintenance of an otherwise democratic state such as the UK). At one point, Giles writes that "[t]he film's release coincided with a renewed thrust in the IRA's campaign on the mainland [Britain], which perhaps made the press wary of *The Crying Game* but certainly raised the stakes in the ongoing discussion about the cinematic representations of the IRA" (40). It is precisely my argument – and as I have shown this is *not* an original insight – that the film is in fact significantly *lowering* those stakes. Giles also recalls how the film's producer Stephen Woolley "berated the newspaper arts editors and television media producers (rather than cinema critics) for having declined to cover the film because they considered its [political] content 'too strong meat.' To Woolley, ignoring the film was ignoring the horrendous reality of the Troubles..." (44). While this kind of hyperbole is a fairly typical example of the self-serving assessment in which Hollywood film producers seem to specialise, it seems especially egregious considering how *The Crying Game* itself so studiously ignores the "horrendous reality of the Troubles;" the film is able to give the appearance of political engagement (it does indeed invoke a violently unstable political situation) at the same time that it fails to actually say anything about the conflict. Giles writes that "Jordan is a Republican, 'in the old-fashioned sense' as he told the *Daily Telegraph* (10 December 1994), but his politics reflect his preoccupation with the difficulties of moral choices and his ambivalence is in contrast with what he has called 'the horribly coherent view' of the IRA" (41). One accusation *The Crying Game* is not open to is political coherence. Instead, as Jordan's simultaneous embrace of Republicanism and his cryptic dismissal of the IRA itself as "horribly coherent" echoes, it is a film that tries to both have and deny political positions.

Although he's writing about *Angel*, Hill could again be discussing *The Crying Game* when he asserts that "this avoidance of political specifics does not free the film from political implications.... [I]f the film's use of a decontextualising aesthetic strategy necessarily undermines the 'legitimacy' or rationale of political violence, so it also adds to the legitimacy of the state by de-politicising its activities as well" (1987:180). This has been echoed by Lloyd, writing specifically about *The Crying Game*; he asserts that "[i]nsurgency is severed from any articulate, however contestable, programme for social transformation, and, above all, from any relation to the subordinated communities without whose at least passive acquiescence and often active support a long-lasting guerilla campaign is unthinkable. In this, of course, the film corresponds to the strategies of the British and Irish states in those miliary and censorship policies that have attempted to cut off the insurgents from any base in the community, to transform political violence into 'mere' crime by the policy of criminalization..." (67). There is a similar argument to be made about *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*, although that argument, to say the least, isn't so closely tied to civil war or state-sponsored militarist repression.

It is important to consider, of course, that just because a film is evoking conservatism and indifference doesn't mean it is itself conservative or indifferent. But I do not believe that *The Crying Game* is a portrait of the psychological devastation of impotent political violence, any more than I believe that *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* is a serious, *engagé* exposé of the apolitical tendencies of the intellectuals of the Quiet Revolution. Instead, it is clear that both films centrally depend on a strategy that is at the heart of that seminally conservative, capitalist form, Classical Hollywood Cinema, namely, the favouring of interpersonal and character driven elements in favour of political, social or cultural concerns, even when the narrative might seem to demand a re-arranging of such concerns. Unlike *Réjanne Padiovanni* or *Gina*, which as we saw in the last chapter were quite detailed evocations of the corruption of Québec politics, *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* has retreated from the tough, messy work of social and cultural argument, content with a more narrative-clarity-friendly interpersonal drama. And while *Korea* essentially visualised the reconciliation between Free-Staters and Fenians in terms of kids falling in love and wanting to marry, that film also had lots to say about development, landscape, and who got left out in Ireland's slouch towards modernity. There is nothing close to that kind of political detail in *The Crying Game*. "Toothless and grinning" is how J.

Hoberman assessed the political satire of *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* (cited in Wilkins, 119); much the same is true of the way that *The Crying Game* depends on a political situation without really making that situation matter.

But I acknowledge that my judgement may be a bit harsh. Indeed, I am very compelled by the assessment of Thomas Waugh, who wrote in a report from the 1986 Montréal Film Festival, where *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* had its Canadian premiere, that "spiced with enough humour, eroticism and melodrama to make it marketable, *Decline* seems to have perfectly matched the mood of its audience in postreferendum, postmodernist, postfeminist, postpopulist, and neo-Bourassa Québec" (167). Substitute"post Anglo-Irish Agreement" for "postreferendum" and "reluctantly Fianna Fáil/Tory" for neo-Bourassa and you have a very good assessment of *The Crying Game*. The combination of political content with a Hollywood-style lack of specificity did indeed gel well with a prevailing mood, visible in Canada, Québec, the UK and Ireland, well into the 1990s. What we will see, though, is that both Jordan and Arcand, in their next, and equally widely circulated films, could indeed find themselves engaging more closely with cultural and political arguments.

II. *Jésus de Montréal* and *Michael Collins*

There is certainly a sense that both *Jésus de Montréal* and *Michael Collins*, like *The Crying Game* and *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*, could be coherently read without any knowledge of either Irish or Québec culture, politics, or history. But I believe that there is in both of these later films a different, more heightened sense of engagement with political arguments, and that both of these films are in fact much harder to read without some knowledge of these arguments than their immediate predecessors. Indeed, both of these films are clearly the products of cultures in transition, and of filmmakers who find themselves caught between political positions. As we have seen throughout this and the previous chapter Arcand clearly sympathises with much of what has gone on in the Quiet Revolution, although he just as clearly dislikes the version of modernity Québec has since adopted. Almost fifteen years after it was made, *Jésus de Montréal* remains his most coherent, wide-ranging statement on this state of affairs. Similarly, Neil Jordan obviously has a great deal of sympathy with Republican or nationalist aims, but he is also clearly influenced by Revisionist strains in Irish history that seek to problematise the country's violent history; while we see hints of this in films such as *Angel* and *The Crying Game*, *Michael Collins* is certainly the most fully political film he has yet made. If my tone in the last chapter was somewhat pessimistic with regards to the way that a globalised, semi-Hollywood cinema deals with actual political, social and historical arguments, these two films are cause for more optimism on the part of those who would like to see such questions remain part of world cinema.

While there are hints of social critique in *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*, it is *Jésus de Montréal* that takes the zeitgeist of the Québec of the 1980s as its explicit topic. Arcand visualises the city as a place filled with frustrated artists, people who have developed serious artistic ambitions but who are able to express them through only work in such crass areas as beer commercials and the dubbing of porno films. To quote Bart Testa, Montréal "is a place where art is travestied, degraded and bruised by commercial culture. In this commercial city there is, effectively, no art, only mass-media products and vulgar celebrity" (1995:90). Arcand also visualises Montréal as a place where everything seems temporary and fleeting, where everyone is gripped with a vague sense of insecurity. Weinmann writes of the film that "[c]omme Jésus de Nazareth, celui de Montréal arrache ses disciples à leur condition de vie instable. Les « publicans » du temps de Jésus sont devenus les « pigistes », travailleurs temporaires, « chargés de cours », bref des gens avec des « jobs pas *steady* »" (194) [Like Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus of Montréal lifts up his disciples up out of their unstable living conditions. The "publicans" of Jesus' time have become the "freelancers," temporary workers, "TAs"; it's all the lot of the folks without "steady jobs"]. All of this could be said, of course, to be as non-specific as the cultural anxieties that are dissected in *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*. And like with the *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*, it could also be said to be reflective of the state of Québec in the late 80s and early 90s, a period marked by a certain loss of purpose vis-à-vis the evolution of a modernised society and the legacy of the Quiet Revolution. But what separates *Jésus de Montréal* from *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*, and what makes believe that this later film is the more genuinely socially engaged one, is that the narrative of *Jésus de Montréal* has very little other than this kind of exposition. There is none of the pseudo-cosmic "what has happened to us since the sixties?" or "what would happen after nuclear war?" kind of chatter that accounts for so much of *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*. Indeed, although this is a much more narrative film than *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*, and is even explicitly theological, *Jésus de Montréal* feels much more modest than the earlier work. Both films have narratives that have allegorical value: *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* seems to find the cosmos in a dinner party (à la Godard's *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle*'s cosmos in the coffee cup), but *Jésus de Montréal* is operating in reverse, essentially finding Montréal in the story of Christ.

And that strategy is an odd mixture of the way that Montréal has traditionally been represented. André Loiselle has written of the polarising way that Québec filmmakers have viewed the city, noting that "il y a certainement aussi une tendance à polariser l'image de la ville selon que le cinéaste la voit comme 'gros village' encore attaché à son passé champêtre, ou comme métropole décadente qui menace la pureté du personnage" (1999b:1) [there is also certainly a tendency to polarise the image of the city, depending on whether the filmmaker sees it as a 'big village' still attached to its countryside past, or as a decadent metropolis that threatens the purity of the character]. But Loiselle also acknowledges that *Jésus de Montréal* is a complicated case, writing that "[s]i la ville pour Arcand n'était pas encore entièrement déchet dans *Jésus de Montréal*, ses salles d'urgences et ses églises n'en sont pas moins remplies d'individus qui, comme le Curé Leclerc le souligne, ont atteint le fond du baril de la misère humaine, de la maladie et de la folie" (1999b:6) [if, for Arcand, the city is not yet completely trashed in *Jésus de Montréal*, its emergency rooms and its churches are still full of individuals who, as Fr. Leclerc underlines, have hit rock bottom in terms of human misery, suffering and foolishness]. Indeed, there is a sense that while Montréal is visualised as a place of art and expression and possibility, it is also something of a purgatory, where people have to sell themselves and their art in order to survive. It is a kind of fallen city, not necessarily the kind of paranoid vision that Loiselle sees as common in Québec cinema, but not exactly a utopia either.

But rather than trying to figure out whether *Jésus de Montréal* visualises Montréal as a decadent metropolis (à la the *film noir* visions of New York, Los Angeles or, as we have seen London and Belfast), I think it is more fruitful to link the film to a lesser-known vision of the city film, that of the "Confidential film." Writing of the cycle of 1950s films that dealt with the seedy underbellies of various US cities (such as *The Phenix* [sic] *City Story* [1955], *Portland Exposé* [1957], *New Orleans Uncensored* [1955], or *Kansas City Confidential* [1952]), Will Straw has asserted that "the unfolding of this cycle... will stand for the resurgence of regional film making practices and marginal distribution and exhibition circuits. Most of these films are about peripheral geographical locations, and their own thematic and industrial obscurity works to block their participation in any generalized, moral panic over organized crime" (1997:119). Replace "organized crime" with "rot of the city" and you have a good description of Arcand's project and mode of production here. In a way that is not so far from the city films that Straw describes, *Jésus de Montréal* is part of a very vibrant practice of basically regional film making, and a film that seeks to evoke in a considerable amount of (less lurid and more socio-cultural) detail the life of

Montréal as a city that in terms of globalised Hollywood film making is fairly categorised as a peripheral geographic location. And Straw has also written about these same "Confidential" films in the context of the 1951 novel *Montréal: Ville Ouvert,* the 1950 exposé *Montreal Confidential* by *Montreal Herald* reporter Al Palmer, and the 1992 broadcast of the Radio-Canada téléroman *Scoop*. He asserts that "what distinguished *Montreal Confidential* from its US models is its transformation of deviance into eccentricity, and its subsumption of political problems specific to Montreal and Quebec within a series of local particularisms" (1992:63). This is crucial to *Jésus de Montréal*'s status as a kind of latter-day "city film": the moral panic here is gone, in its place is an exposé of the city's diversity and "eccentricity," an exposé that is, consistent with Loiselle's reading of Québec cinema as mostly conflicted over whether the city is evil or glorious, deeply ambiguous. Straw writes that "[a]rguably, the textual labour of many fictions set in Montreal is invested in fixing a relationship between the linguistic difference which is a principle subtext of that city's politics and the various diversities which define it as urban" (1992:64). This is, as Weinmann argues, also a significant part of *Jésus de Montréal*'s textual labour, and an important part of what links the film to a cinematic cycle that, while influenced by American visions of the city, has mostly been about trying to visualise a metropolis in ways that combined its sense of centrality (in relation to Québec, or to Canada) and its sense of detachment (from the metropolois of Hollywood film making, which allows for a more regional strategy).

Testa sees this allegorical nature of the film as something of a summary of Arcand's work so far, and it seems especially relevant to what I am trying to argue here. Testa writes that:

> [T]he potential for rebirth of Christian symbolism through historical knowledge, figured under the sign of a redemptive recollection which art offers, is extended beyond the troupe to the chosen but lost people who attend the play – potentially everyone – and who are moved by it. We should extend this further. The political redemptive power of historical memory potentially to restore public morality and social justice has been the crucial, and constantly repeated leitmotif of Arcand's film making since his very first documentaries and certainly since *On est au coton*. (1995:103)

So while *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* was about the end of, or the escape from, history, culture and politics and the rewarding of the body, *Jésus de Montréal* is centrally about the return to history, culture and politics, a return that happens through the punishment of the body, both symbolically (through the performance of the Passion Play) and literally (through the death of Daniel while performing that play). And that return is finalised at the end of the film, through the dismemberment of the body (and the communion of others with it?), as Daniel's young, undamaged organs (which are described by the physician at the English-language hospital as "a godsend") are distributed to people all over the city. What this is clearly not, though, is a return to the puritan Catholicism against which the characters of *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* are reacting. The Passion Play is a decidedly eccentric production, and is eventually shut down by the Catholic hierarchy. Fr. Raymond Leclerc (as in *le clerc*, the cleric), the priest who sponsors them, is the longtime boyfriend of one of the actresses. He admits he has stayed a priest because it is a comfortable life; he is a character who

Arcand clearly sees as hopelessly compromised but for whom he also has some sympathy. This invocation of a modern, post-Quiet Revolution understanding of the Church is a clear statement that the film will have a very complex relationship with a central part of Québec's culture. And these actors also are vociferously rebelling against the capitalist élite, a sector that Québec culture had to struggle against in order to emerge into modernity. In this film that group speaks French, but Arcand makes it clear that it hardly matters; Daniel still has to smash their film equipment when their crass commercialism threatens to destroy the aesthetic souls of his friends and, by extension, his culture.

It is as if, in a rare flourish of optimism and idealism, Arcand is calling for a new Quiet Revolution. This is close to how Weinmann reads the film. He begins his analysis by writing that "Arcand revient sur son propre passé se trouvant aussi le passé collectif des Québécois, d'avant la « Révolution Tranquille »" (178) [Arcand returns to his own past, also finding the collective past of the Québécois, the past before the "Quiet Revolution"]. But by the end of his very long analysis, he has concluded that Daniel "peut devenir ainsi aussi l'exemple d'un Québec futur, hospitalier comme il l'a été aux débuts de la colonie, accueillant, ouvert à l'Autre, pour que cet Autre, à son tour, s'ouvre au Québec, pour que les mains du Québécois de « souche » et de l'Autre se joignent dans un geste fraternel, *symbole* du Québec de demain" (255, emphasis his) [Daniel can in this way also become the example for a future Québec, hospitable as it was in the early days of the colony, open to the Other, so that this Other, in his turn, opens himself to Québec, so that the "old stock" Québécois and the Other can join hands in a fraternal gesture, as a *symbol* of the Québec of tomorrow]. Janice Pallister argues that it is the Haitian woman spectator who intrudes on one of the performances, thinking it to be real, that represents Québec's "other" (385). But that seems to me to be something of a throwaway joke, not particularly central to the film's meaning. Instead, we see this openness not though any literal embrace of "the Other" (nobody in the film is hugging any Chileans or wandering into any mosques) but through a kind of embrace of "the Other within." The actors themselves are from a diverse number of societal fringes; the troupe is comprised of a porno-dubber, a planetarium narrator (played by avant-garde theatre wunderkind Robert Lepage), an out-of-work commercial actor, a successful high-fashion model, and a cook. The film's Christian allegory derives from precisely the fact that Daniel is bringing people from all corners of society and leading them to the redemption that can be found in Art.

There is a legitimate critique to be made of the film, and some of the arguments surrounding it (including my own), that Arcand is having his multicultural cake and eating it too, visualising a more tolerant, open Québec without bothering to visualise any non-Francophones. But if *Jésus de Montréal* is indeed re-conceptualising the Quiet Revolution – and the film's engagement with culture, religion, capital and modernity in general make that a more than reasonable understanding – then it is not unreasonable that it does not explicitly engage with issues that had very little to do with that Revolution as such, such as immigration. Québec certainly has major problems trying to reconcile its non-Francophone citizens into its idea of nationhood, and a big part of the reason for this is precisely that consideration of these citizens, or of any real diversity, was not part of the Quiet Revolution. *Jésus of Montréal* has as its main task to imagine a Québec that would have been better prepared to deal with enormous cultural transformations not only of the 1960s, but also the 1970s and 80s, decades that saw a great deal of non-white immigration. But whether a progressive re-conceptualisation of emerging nationhood or an amnesiac, ethnically chauvinistic romanticisation of an unrealised societal transformation, *Jésus de Montréal* is, in a way that is quite unlike *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*, engaged with the culture of Québec in a way that is explicit and detailed.

Indeed, the film echoes the development of Québec's approach to pluralism as outlined by Danielle Juteau. She writes that:

> Parmi les premiers jalons de l'élaboration au Québec de l'option pluraliste, mentionnons le *Livre blanc sur le développement de la politique culturelle* en 1978, la création du ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration en 1981, assorti d'un plan d'action à l'intention des communautés culturelles, et l'*Énoncé de politique en matière d'immigration et d'intégration* en 1990. Ici, le terme *Québécois* embrasse l'ensemble des habitants du Québec tandis que s'estompe la frontière tracée jadis entre les Québécois et les communautés culturelles. (208)
>
> [Among the first milestones in the elaboration in Québec of the pluralist option, let's mention the *Livre blanc sur le développement de la politique culturelle* in 1978, the creation of the Ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration in 1981, matched by a plan of action for the benefit of the cultural communities, and the *Énoncé de politique en matière d'immigration et d'intégration* in 1990. Here, the term *Québécois* embraces the all inhabitants of Québec at the same time that it blurs the border that had formerly been marked between the *Québécois* and the cultural communities.]

A longing for the fulfilment of this kind of pluralist idealism is at the centre of *Jésus de Montréal*'s narrative, and the momentum towards such pluralism that Juteau describes seemed to reach its peak just as the film was being released. This film, then, is a re-imagining of the post-referendum situation; in contrast to the defeatism and apoliticism that *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* seemed to put forward as the seminal condition of post-referendum Québec, *Jésus de Montréal* seems to be reading the disarray that followed the defeat as an spur to the reevaluation of the nature of the Québec collectivity. While Juteau sees this impulse as closely tied to matters of immigration and integration, Arcand is following a slightly different track, one that is not actually so far away. He is trying to evoke the kind of reevaluation of artists' place in a new Québec collectivity. Writing about artists in post-Quiet Revolution Québec, Lorraine Pintal asserts that:

> Ce qu'il y a d'acquis, et nous l'avons compris en mesurant l'évolution de la culture québécoise et son épanouissement autant sur le territoire national qu'à l'étranger, c'est la force de création du peuple québécois. Un vrai seuil de maturité a été atteint. Les artistes sont des ambassadeurs irréprochables de la vitalité du Québec à l'étranger. Ils représentent également une force collective indéniable et la population a besoin de croire en la force de sa collectivité. Elle ne demande qu'à participer à des projets qui nourrissent l'idéal collectif."
> (269)

> [What we have experienced, and we have understood it by measuring the evolution of Québec culture and its blossoming both within the national territory and abroad, is the creative power of the Québec people. A true threshold of maturity has been attainted. Artists are unquestionable ambassadors of the vitality of Québec to the world outside. They also represent an undeniable collective force and the population needs to believe in the power of their collectivity. It is more than willing to participate in projects that nourish the collective ideal.]

I think it is especially relevant that Pintal calls for artists to be given greater recognition as a re-vitalised Québec collectivity because of their contributions to Québec's recognition *internationally*. Less that the consolidation of an inward-looking ethnic nationalism, both Pintal and Juteau are tracing the re-definition of the Québec nation along more open, unstable lines. Artists, like non-*pure-laine* citizens, have significant contribution to make, contributions that have too often been excluded from conceptions of a new Québec. *Jésus de Montréal*, in its longing for a Montréal that is more open to art and passionate belief, is calling for a re-evaluation of the societal transformation that began in the 1960s but which has yet to fulfill its radical potential. This failure is at the core of *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* as well, but here, we see it dealt with in an engaged, proscriptive way, as opposed to the passivity and cynicism that the earlier film embraces.

Michael Collins, is also, like *Jésus de Montréal*, a film that only makes partial sense without some knowledge of the arguments about Irish history, including the Anglo-Irish War, the Civil War, and the ongoing war in Northern Ireland. Like *Jésus de Montréal,* there is a sense that Jordan is trying to re-conceptualise this crucial period in Irish history as a way of making an intervention into contemporary debates. Many of the film's commentators have remarked on this. Furthermore, Jordan seems to be trying to find a "middle ground" in Irish historiography: he ends up stuck somewhere between a emergent postcolonial understanding of Ireland and "Revisionist" approaches. Whereas *The Crying Game* was notable, like *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*, for the way that it invoked a set of cultural arguments without elaborating on them in any meaningful way, let alone dealing with some of their contradictions, *Michael Collins* is, like *Jésus of Montréal*, a kind of essay on the unfinished development of a politically embattled country.

The release of *Michael Collins* caused a considerable controversy in the UK, the Republic of Ireland and to a lesser extent in the United States and Canada. This was not, to say the least, only because it seemed to be offering an original interpretation of Ireland's distant past. It would be tedious in the extreme to summarise the voluminous number of op-ed pieces, interviews and reviews that appeared about the film;[7] what is important about this work for my purposes here is that just about all of it makes some mention of the current crisis in Northern Ireland. Keith Hopper has recalled how some critics have read "Collins as a latter-day Gerry Adams – 'Neil Jordan has given us... a Northern Collins, a savage Collins, a basically Belfast Collins who deals out death to faceless digits...'" (10; the ellipses are in the original, and Hopper does not say whom he is citing). Part of this "Belfast" subtext comes from the urban nature of the film's action (and most "Troubles Films" are urban in setting): Luke Gibbons links this with the film's overall *film noir* atmospherics, writing that "every corner of the city comes under the shadow of the gunman, and the boundaries between good and evil, moderation and extremism, become increasingly difficult to discern" (1997:16). This use of film noir is a bit like *The Crying Game* in reverse: where that film used generic conventions in order to invoke a contemporary political crisis and then evacuate it of political importance, *Michael Collins* uses these conventions to invoke the violence and instability of a particular historical period (one that is *not* contemporary to *film noir* as a genre) and then invest it with contemporary political importance. But the Northern linkage is complicated, and arguably contradictory. In a dialogue with Tom Paulin published in *Sight and Sound*, Ronan Bennett says that "I've always been quite intrigued when people say Jordan treats Republicans sympathetically in his films – it seems to me anything but. If we do accept this dichotomy of Collins the pragmatist, the Gerry Adams figure, and deValera as the equivalent of the modern IRA hardliners, then actually the Republican is deValera and the moderate is Collins" (32). I am less interested in whether Jordan is "pro-Republican"; what seems crucial about the film and the way that it has been received is that it has provoked an engagement with the contradictory strains of Ireland's recent history, and has done so in a way that makes it perfectly clear that this history is still unresolved, still part of everyday life.

And this history is complicated. When the Irish forces fighting the War for Independence achieved a cease-fire with the British forces, Collins was dispatched to London to finalise a treaty. What emerged from those talks was a agreement that 26 counties of Ireland (all the counties that were part of Home Rule, which excluded what is now Northern Ireland) would form the "Free State of Ireland." The Free State would remain a member of the Commonwealth, and the members of its parliament would continue to take an oath of loyalty to the Crown. This fell well short of the desired 32-county, fully independent Republic. A substantial faction refused to recognise the treaty, and they eventually sparked the Irish Civil War (1922-23), which saw fighting between the "Free Staters" who believed that the Free State was a necessary compromise, and the "Fenians," members of Sinn Féin who refused to accept the legitimacy of the treaty or the Free State itself (and who were lead by Éamon deValera). The Free Staters prevailed, and as we saw in Cathal Black's *Korea*, the resentment between the two parties left lasting scars in the life of the nation.

One of the products of that unresolved history has been the school of Irish history loosely known as "Revisionism." The main thrust of Revisionist history (the leading lights of which are probably Roy Foster, author of *Modern Ireland: 1600-1972*, and R. Dudley Edwards and T.W. Moody, editors of *Irish Historical Studies*) is a questioning of the heroic narrative of violent anti-British struggle. Often this includes an emphasis on Home Rule and the inevitability of Irish independence or at least self-determination; the War of Independence, then, is seen as a horrible waste, not a heroic moment of anti-colonial insurrection. What is important to this school is the emergence of a state apparatus on the island of Ireland, a state apparatus that is arguably the result of the influence of the former British state (a functional parliament, a national police force, etc.). Seamus Deane writes of Revisionist historians that "their project has been understood – in some ways quite rightly – as the moment of professionalization in historical writing in Ireland" (185). This should not, however, disguise the dislike that Deane, like most of the Irish left, harbours for such historical perspectives. "Ultimately, one has to say that reality is a matter of contingencies which it is the task of the historian – somehow – to render unintelligible" is how he describes the movement's world-view. David Lloyd is just as stinging: "[f]or imperialist, and perhaps much the same thing, revisionist histories, violence may or may not be an endemic quality of the Irish, but it is what summons into being the emergence of a modern state apparatus in Ireland: a national police force, administration and legal system, education and even parliamentary democracy. Violence is understood as an atavistic and disruptive principle counter to the rationality of a legal constitution as barbarity is to an emerging civility, anarchy to culture" (125). That final swipe at the famously anti-Irish Matthew Arnold really sums up the positions here; Revisionism is seen by many as patronising, willfully deluded, and, most damningly, complicit with imperialism.

Ironically, Jordan seems to offer something of a Revisionist analysis in his lionisation of Collins, who is mostly revered in Ireland for his role in the very violent struggle that Revisionists seek to downplay. For while there is plenty of violence and somewhat romanticised military struggle, Jordan's Collins, Northern though he may be, eventually becomes something of a sceptic. The sequence where the British formally lower the Union Jack and so formally surrender power features Collins, in full military dress, saying to a British general "so, that's what all this was about, eh?" as the flag comes down. Further, Collins clearly emerges as the martyr for reason, as the man who understands that compromise is necessary and so dies for it at the hands of unyielding, fanatic Fenians. This emergence from violent revolutionary struggle into a more or less liberal vision of statism is presented by Jordan as the truly heroic path, and this move from guerilla to professional even echoes the evolution of these historical arguments themselves.

I would argue that one of the major accomplishments of *Michael Collins* is to bring these nationalist/anti-imperialist and Revisionist historical views somewhat closer together. Brian McIlroy writes that "[i]f a bias exists in the film, it is towards the Dublin-centred Free Staters, who formed Fine Gael and whose party now represents a mainly urban and educated bourgeoisie, not unlike Neil Jordan himself" (1999:28), seeing the film as indicative of a complacent, somewhat self-satisfied middle-class Irish nationalism. But I am more persuaded by Luke Gibbons assessment that "[i]nstead of discrediting 'the nation' [as Revisionists might seek to] or 'the Republic' [as would strict nationalists who believe a Republic without Northern Ireland is incomplete], the film arguably throws a shadow over the incomplete project of Irish *state* formation, a shadow that extends into the present" (1996a:263, emphasis his). This longing for a state is indeed at the core of the film, but so is the validation of violent struggle. What seemed to most upset anti-Collins (or anti-*Michael Collins*) commentators is that the film declines to unambiguously denounce violence. But to do this, regardless of what effect it might have had on contemporary relations in Northern Ireland, would be a major distortion of Irish history. The political landscape of the post-Civil War Free State and Republic of Ireland has been a deeply schizophrenic one, as those leaders who were once leaders of the IRA (such as Eamon de Valera) eventually found themselves outlawing the organisation and interning its members during World War II.[8] Indeed, Gibbons has also written that "Jordan's real transgression is to establish affinities of any kind between the events of Collins' life and the present, unresolved conflict in Northern Ireland, for this disrupts the complacency which encourages an idealization of one at the expense of the other" (1996a:16). This complacency is a deeply ingrained part of Irish political life, as generation after generation of leader tries to ignore the fact that many of the statues in downtown Dublin are of former IRA members. *Michael Collins* brings this history to (sometimes embellished) light, insisting that violent struggle is indeed part of Irish history, but also that the setting aside of the romanticism that inevitably defines the history of such struggle must be set aside in favour of the duller, quieter work of state building. Arguments about the historical veracity of the film are, then, beside the point: Jordan's task here is to encourage Irish people, north and south of the partition, that it is the compromisers who should be lionised, no matter what they may have done before they became compromisers. This seems to me to contradict the Robert Ray/*Certain Tendency of Hollywood Cinema* schema that I invoked in discussing *The Crying Game*. Rather than trying to smooth over or deny the existence of political paradox, Jordan seems quite aware that the defining myths of Irish culture are contradictory. While he does, in good, Classical Hollywood form, visualise the whole conflict in terms of the struggles of an individual (Collins), that conflict's implications for the State, and for Northern Ireland, are unmistakable. Not entirely free of the compromise that globalised realist form demands, *Michael Collins* is quite a bit more sophisticated about Irish politics and history than *The Crying Game*.

Charles Townshend cuts right to the heart of this matter when he writes (also in the pages of *Sight and Sound*) that Jordan "wants his film to help Ireland 'grow up' by facing difficult aspects of its past" (56). This "growing up" is quite similar to what's going on in *Jésus of Montréal*, of which Weinmann writes that:

> Le Canadien français devenu Québécois répudie saint Jean-Baptiste, puisqu'il représente justement l'image de son moi qu'il s'agit de répudier : celle du Canadien français missionnaire spirituel qui renonce au monde matériel, politique d'ici, du médiateur au service d'un Autre (France, Angleterre, Église catholique). Se disant adulte, le Québécois rejette toute idée de dépendance, de filiation qui rappelle son ancien état d'enfance l'ayant amené à s'identifier pendant près de cent vingt ans à l'enfant Jean-Baptiste.
> (181)
>
> [The French-Canadian turned Québécois repudiates St. John the Baptist, since it was only his image, his aura, that needed to be repudiated: the aura of the French-Canadian spiritual missionary that renounced that material world and contemporary politics, of the mediator who was at the service of another (France, England, the Catholic Church). Then becoming an adult, the Québécois rejected all notions of dependence, of service that recalled his former state of childhood, having been led to identify for the last 120 years with the child John the Baptist.]

Similarly, Jordan is demanding that Ireland stop identifying with a simple, timeless vision of anti-colonial struggle, stop lionising the founders of the state as people bringing the gospel of post-colonialism and forsaking all worldly benefits. It may be that John the Baptist is an icon of self-sacrifice and the IRA an icon of violent self-assertion, but both icons demand obedience and ignorance of complex political contradictions. Instead, Jordan's Collins, like Arcand's Christ, is a compromiser: Daniel rejects the piety and simplicity of Québec Catholicism, and Jordan is criticising the anti-treaty piety that eventually killed Collins. There is a way in which *Michael Collins* (less so than *Jésus de Montréal*) could be seen as conforming to Ray's schema for Hollywood films that invoke complex political problems and then pretend they can be resolved. But it seems to me that the film is instead recognising the complexity of the Irish political situation and then refusing to make simple pronouncement about that situation. *Michael Collins* may be refusing to make a choice between violent struggle and political compromise, but it is making a choice between Fenians and Free-Staters: it is very explicitly on the side of the latter.

And it may be true, as Marcia Landy writes, that "*Michael Collins* is a testimonial to the new internationalism that characterize the cinema of the last decades of the twentieth century" (44), in much the same way that Bill Marshall is probably correct in asserting that *Jésus de Montréal*, with *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*, "inaugurated, at the end of the 1980s, a cinema preoccupied less by national self-definition, assertion and creation than by the awareness of a Québec inserted in global flows of culture and communication" (285). These films could be circulated internationally, and throughout North America, like *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* or *The Crying Game* (and in a North American exhibition environment that precludes theatrical releases for films as various as the Iranian Abbas Kiarsotami's *The Wind Will Carry Us* [1999] or the English-Canadian Bruce Sweeny's *Dirty* [1988], this is no mean feat). But these later films are far more closely engaged with political arguments, and treat these arguments with far more respect and care, than do the earlier films. Landy writes that "*Michael Collins* appears at a time when the reexamination of history is at the centre of a great deal of commercial film production that emanates from Hollywood, European, Asian, African and Latin American cinemas" (30). This analysis is far more aware of the place occupied by films like *Michael Collins* or *Jésus de Montréal*, films that are very difficult to fully understand if one is unaware of basic aspects of the cultures from which they emanate (the arguments about the Irish Civil War or the war in Northern Ireland, the place of Catholicism in Québec society or the unfinished work of the Quiet Revolution). This kind of discussion also speaks to a much clearer understanding of the work the film is doing than are statements like John Harkness' assessment of Arcand; he writes that "[w]ith *Decline of the American Empire* and *Jésus de Montréal*, he has moved on to the international film scene while remaining resolutely Canadian" (238). Leaving aside for now the question of whether Arcand could be reasonably understood, or would even want to be known, as "resolutely Canadian," this seems to me a classic example of a critic wanting to have his culturally distinct cake and eat it too, refusing to commit in a way that Robert Ray would probably recognise.

Conclusion

I have resisted, throughout this chapter, the urge to ascribe a value judgement to the differing degrees to which Jordan and Arcand's late films have engaged with local political arguments. No filmmaker, after all, is obligated to deal with the politics that emanate from his or her hometown; I certainly would not want to support a simple binarism of "local=good / non-local=Hollywood/bad." And I certainly do not want to become of the "those doctrinaire Stalinists who denounced Joyce for not incorporating the Easter Rising into *Ulysses* (though it is set in 1904)" that Luke Gibbons invokes in his discussion of *Michael Collins* (1997:16).

But I have not resisted this urge very successfully, and there are good reasons for that. For one, I think that critics such as Harkness and Pallister, for all the benevolent internationalist noise they make, are actually adopting a version of the binary I have just invoked, although in reverse: for them Arcand was a small-time provincial when he engaged with Québec, and is now a fully mature auteur now that he's not engaging with much of anywhere. But what is most striking for me about these films is that the first two I discuss do in fact invoke political arguments and tensions, only to drop them or deal with them in a very superficial way. This seems to me to speak to a trivialisation of important arguments that both needs to be pointed out and which should be ascribed to the (I believe unhappy) tendency of Classical Hollywood cinema to erase political nuance. Similarly, later films by both these filmmakers invoke these same arguments and deal with them in a more substantive way, and in a way that is more open to the contradictions inherent to these arguments. These later films are, I believe, a more optimistic vision of what a globalised world cinema can do. This is not simply a matter of saying, as Janice Pallister does of *Jésus de Montréal*, that "like all good works of art, it is concerned with the local and the universal, the particular and the general" (381).[9] Instead, I would argue that like all coherent, fully realised texts, *Michael Collins* and *Jésus de Montréal* are complicated and engage in dialogue with the concepts they invoke, and like all incoherent, shallow works of art, *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* and *The Crying Game* use these concepts as window dressing, bringing them into their narratives but allowing them to be ignored if necessary. As Irish and Québec cinema are now, without question, part of a globalised world cinema (in a way that, say, Slovak cinema is not, or in a way that Irish and Québec cinema were not a decade or two earlier than the period this chapter discusses, and as I discussed in the previous chapter), I do not think it too moralistic to say that the former path is indeed to be preferred.

Notes:

1. I do not deal in this chapter with the films that Jordan has made in England and Hollywood, nor with the films Arcand has made in English Canada. This is not because I want to adopt a *pure laine* or *fior-ghael* approach to Ireland or Québec's cinema. I readily acknowledge that both Arcand and Jordan have made works in these contexts that could be argued to be relevant to their overall concerns as filmmakers. *Stardom* (2000), which is basically about Ontario and what a vapid, soul-killing place it can be, adopts a sense of defeatism and cynicism that is entirely consistent with Arcand's body of work and quite close to the sardonic wit of *Jésus de Montréal*. Jordan's *Mona Lisa* (1986) feels like a warm-up for the *film-noir*-ish psycho-sexual back and forth of *The Crying Game*: it is set in the mafia-controlled underworld of London and stars Cathy Tyson, a dead ringer for Jaye Davidson/Dil, and who turns out to be a lesbian, much to the disappointment of Bob Hoskins, who falls in love with her. I exclude these films because, in that grand tradition of academic selectivity (and as a blow against my auteurist/encyclopaedic roots), they do not quite fit with what I am trying to argue here. *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*, *Jésus de Montréal*, *The Crying Game* and *Michael Collins* are interesting for the purposes of this chapter, and this dissertation as a whole, because of the way that they jam, and sometimes fail to jam, local discourse into the demands of a globalised form. *Stardom* and *Mona Lisa* are interesting as well, but for different reasons, and so I am sorry to leave them out.

2. Jordan has said in a number of interviews (including one in McIlroy 1988) that he was most unhappy with the result. This is also discussed by Richard Halsam (see especially page 137). Part of this, no doubt, is because of the highly elliptical, almost non-narrative quality of the film as finished; he said that he found it confusing, and turned to directing because he wanted his screenplays "done properly." *Traveller* is, to return once again to my autuerist roots, much more of a Comerford film than a Jordan one.

3. The English filmmaker John Boorman (*Point Blank* [1967], *Excalibur* [1981], *The Emerald Forest* [1985], *Hope and Glory* [1987]) was the executive producer on *Angel*, and he is generally acknowledged to have been something of a mentor for Jordan (Jordan is credited as a "creative associate" on *Excalibur*). As I mentioned in the introduction, Boorman has actually been quite active in Irish cinema; he was involved in the setting up of Ardmore studios (where he did the sound editing on *Excalibur*) and was on the

executive of the first Bord Scannán na hÉireann. Also as discussed in the introduction, Boorman was also involved in arguments about whether a nascent Irish cinema should be independent or more commercially oriented; he was essentially on the other side of the table from filmmakers like Bob Quinn, Joe Comerford Thaddeus O'Sullivan, or Cathal Black.

4. Daniel Dayan is arguing something similar, in a more explicitly Marxist/Althusserian way. "Unable to understand the causes of a structure, what they are and how they function, such a conception considers the structure as a cause in itself," he writes. "The effect is substituted for the cause; the cause remains unknown or becomes mythical (the 'theological' author)" (23). This brings us back, of course, to many of the problems discussed in the chapter on *Maeve* and *Les Ordres*, two films about political violence that were indeed more concerned with ideological complexity, and, as Dayan might say, "causes."

5. A good example of this cycle is Carol Reed's 1946 film *Odd Man Out*. Dai Vaughan argues in his BFI monograph on the film that Reed visualises the conflict between the British and the Irish an as entirely metaphysical and personal matter where politics are basically irrelevant.

6. Unsurprisingly, the *Village Voice*'s J. Hoberman (who is, with Jonathan Rosenbaum, the United States' most knowledgeable film critic and the one most rigorously engaged with non-Hollywood cinema) was an exception. He wrote of the film that "what's most remarkable about this gang is that neither they nor Arcand... have an iota of historical consciousness of themselves as Québécois, Canadian, or the products of a strongly Catholic and highly puritanical society" (cited in Wilkins 119).

7. *Michael Collins* created quite a storm in the British press especially, attracting more attention from historians and political pundits than from film critics. These commentaries include Glen Newey, "Agency Without Blame: The Significant Omissions of Michael Collins," *Times Literary Supplement*, 15 November 1996; George Brock, "Glorified Hitman" *Sunday Times*, 2 November 1996; and the unsigned "The Lying Game," *Daily Telegraph*, 16 November 1996. Historians Roy Foster and Paul Bew also blasted the film's inaccuracies in the *Sunday Times* and *Daily Telegraph*, respectively.

8. One contemporary manifestation of this schizophrenia, or, to use another therapeutic metaphor, denial, are the obituaries for men who fought in the Anglo-Irish War or the Civil War. "He served in the old IRA" you will often see in obituaries in the *Irish Times*; it is as if the country is not quite willing to give up the glory of its own "great wars," but not quite able to face up to their contemporary resonance. That problem in the obituary pages, at any rate, is not likely to last more than another few years.

9. Filmmakers like Satyajit Ray or Abbas Kiarostami would seem to provide a perfect example of filmmakers who deal with the local and the international in a way to which filmmakers like Arcand, presumably, can only breathlessly aspire. But I am sceptical of arguments like these: both filmmakers have come in for drubbings from critics who see them as making films primarily for international arthouse audiences. On Ray, see Chuck Kleinhans and Manki Pendakur, "Learning together: synthesizing economic and cultural analysis in the marxist study of third world film and video," *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media* 33 (1988). On Kiarostami, see Houshang Golmakani, "Beyond the Shadow of a Doubt," *Cinemaya: The Asian Film Quarterly* 22 (1994), p.54, or Rashmi Doriswami, "Fajr," *Cinemaya: The Asian Film Quarterly* 23 (1994), p26. I am sceptical of these arguments too, which basically adopt an "internationalist=élitist/bad" kind of binarism. But it's just as absurd to say that Ray's films can be fully understood without

knowing something about Indian culture and history (why is the father in *Pather Panchali* [1955] a *travelling* preacher? What are all those shots of the railroad doing there?) or that Kiarostami's can be understood without knowing something about Iranian culture (why is *The Wind Will Carry Us* set in Kurdistan? Why do the men in *Where is the Friend's Home* [1987] go on about overpaid foreign engineers, and why do we only hear but never see the little boy's father?).

Chapter Seven:
Hush-A-Bye-Baby, Irish and Québec Cinema

Although she has a substantial, varied body of work that very much deserves further discussion, Margo Harkin's best-known work *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* (1989) could serve as a kind of encapsulation of the issues that I have been dealing with throughout this dissertation. Three aspects of the film are particularly relevant: its relationship with conventional narrative, its attempts to find alternatives to the compromises of narrative cinema, and its relationship to the institutions of filmmaking. Like most of the films that I have been dealing with throughout this work, *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* is conflicted on formal and ideological levels, never really accepting generic conventions or the political status quo but also never straying into the realm of the aggressively avant-garde or the politically militant. I have been showing throughout this dissertation that Irish and Québec cinema tend to avoid the poles; as national cinemas, they are both defined less by commitment or convention than by moderation. Although it may sound hopelessly wishy-washy, I think that *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* is an exemplary moderate film, in its politics, its form, its approach to production and its questioning of the national cinema. As such, it encapsulates the central debates in both Irish and Québec cinema, and while it would be tempting to compare it with feminist films from Québec, I think that it is, paradoxically, both singular enough and typical enough to warrant discussion on its own.

I. *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* and conventional narrative

Although I have several times stated my understanding that conventional narrative is not necessarily inferior to avant-garde or non-narrative forms, I fear that readers may have come to the conclusion that my heart is not really in that position. And I would acknowledge that it is not raw coincidence that the films I have criticised most harshly, *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* and *The Crying Game*, are also some of the most straightforwardly narrative and realist. But as I discussed in the introduction, conventional narrative has quite a lengthy and dynamic history outside of Hollywood, and it is also no coincidence that we can see significant cycles of the genre in the national cinemas of politically and economically embattled countries like Mexico, India, Algeria or Egypt. Furthermore, as I discussed in the chapter on *Maeve* and *Les Ordres*, I am very sympathetic to André Loiselle's position that melodrama and feminist counter-cinema are actually quite intertwined.

And despite its affinity with political cinema, the cultural work done by melodrama – excessive emotional and potentially political expression and release, evocation of conditions that seem to be beyond rational control, and all of it done in a way that has some reasonable expectation of sparking *popular* discussion – can be seen in spades in *Hush-A-Bye Baby*. But the way that Harkin marshals popular narrative is in fact somewhere in-between what we see in a pulpy, emotionally arousing Third-World melodrama like Emilio Fernandez's *Maria Candalaria* (Mexico, 1943) and a more thematically ambitious (or perhaps just might say pretentious) but still formally straightforward films like *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* or *The Crying Game*. Looking at narrative form in *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* gives us a way not only of talking about films that use this kind of formal mixture in a similarly political way (like *Maeve* or *Les Ordres*), but also films that adopt narrative techniques when it might at first seem formally out of place (as Bob Quinn, Pierre Perrault or John T. Davis do), or films that occlude political complexity even when they seem to belong to a more "intellectual" genre (like the essay films of Jacques Godbout or the some of the narratives of Neil Jordan and Denys Arcand).

Hush-A-Bye-Baby conforms quite closely to the conventions of melodrama. The story centres around Goretti, a 15-year-old girl living in nationalist Derry. Although a framed picture with a tricolour is visible on the wall of her family's living room, and there are mumbles about how one of her brothers has been interned, neither Goretti nor her family seems especially political. Instead, the film centres around the emotional traumas of late adolescence that at first seem to have little to do with Northern Ireland itself; she meets a boy she likes, Ciaran, there is some hemming and hawing about whether they should have sex, they finally do have sex, and eventually Goretti turns out to be pregnant. But this narrative has the politics of Northern Ireland woven into its fabric; the young lovers meet at an Irish-Gaelic class, Ciaran is the oldest in a large family whose father has been interned, they occasionally bump into British Army squaddies, one of whom questions them aggressively (when Ciaran responds with some gibberish in Irish, it turns out the squaddie knows the language much better than he), and the two are part of a community whose conservative Catholic values strike fear of censure and ostracisation into the pregnant Goretti's heart and where abortion, although legal in the UK, is not available in Northern Ireland.

Although it's not a perfect fit, this seems to me quite close to Jackie Byars' assessment that:

> ...the plot of the female-oriented melodrama is motivated by the absence of a patriarchal figure. It begins as the community is invaded by a young and virile "intruder-redeemer" who identifies the problem – the female protagonist's lack of connectedness to a male – and enables its solution: their coupling and integration into the larger community as the heterosexual core of a nuclear family unit. This narrative feature lends credence to readings arguing that family melodramas operate simply and straightforwardly to reinforce a repressive patriarchy, but a reading that focusses on the needs of the female protagonist... requires an expansion of theory, an expansion that recognizes the possibility of change. (104)

Hush-A-Bye-Baby represents a much more female-centred vision of the melodrama than what Byers has in mind here, but its narrative still has plenty of examples of these themes. The heterosexual family which looms so large over this schema, though, is precisely what is being problematised. Although Goretti's "lack of connectedness to a male" does indeed provide a lot of the film's initial dramatic tension, the traditional melodramatic solution – her "integration into the larger community as the heterosexual core of a nuclear family unit" (or, simply, her potential emergence into adulthood in nationalist Derry as a fully-fledged mom) – is indeed what provides the dramatic tension towards the end of the film, but that tension is quite clearly not resolved. Indeed, most of the second half of the film is made up of the troubles that Goretti's pregnancy and looming motherhood cause her. She is clearly ashamed not so much for having sex as for becoming pregnant; there are shots of Goretti's friends – who in other sequences giggle ferociously about sexual matters – calling a young single mom a "slut" as they see her over the bridge in Derry's walled city, and chatter from Goretti's mother about how she had better not turn out like her sister, also a single mom. When she goes to the Republic to spend a week in the Donegal Gaeltacht, she hears a radio broadcast decrying abortion (opening with a shot of the girls dancing to Cindi Lauper's "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun," the film is consciously set in 1984, the year after the very divisive referendum on abortion in the Republic, which eventually upheld the country's constitutional ban on the procedure). And the film's climax comes when she visits an imprisoned Ciaran, who has been rounded up in the sweeps of nationalist areas that were especially prevalent in the mid-80s; she tells him she's pregnant (she had written to him, but wrote the letter in Irish because she didn't want the prison authorities to know she was pregnant; she was unaware of an English-only policy in British prisons, which leads the letter to be destroyed), he gets angry and loudly complains that his fellow prisoners will hassle him even more now, and Goretti storms off. The film's last few scenes feature Goretti drinking a toxic cocktail of alcohol and solvents that she hopes will induce an abortion (we see her naked in the tub, vomiting), and the film closes with a shot of her screaming in bed. It is not clear whether she is having a miscarriage or going into labour. Either way, what we've seen so far makes it clear that this emergence into motherhood does not represent equilibrium, but instead sets into motion all sorts of issues about adulthood, Catholic culture and the way it deals with sexuality, the role Catholic morality plays in Irish nationalism, the tensions between gender and nation, etc.

Although the kind of ambiguity which is at the heart of *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* may seem to run counter to Classical Hollywood's demand for closure and clarity, many critics have argued that melodrama is an especially slippery form of Hollywood narrative. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (in a passage also quoted by Luke Gibbons [1992] to describe the television coverage of the scandals of the 1980s) writes that:

> The tendency of melodrama to culminate in a happy end is not unopposed. The happy end is often impossible, and, what is more, that audience knows it is impossible... The laying out of the problems "realistically" always allows for the generating of an excess which cannot be accommodated. The more the plots press towards a resolution, the harder it is to accommodate the excess.
> (193)

That unaccommodateable excess (particularly excess of emotion and of dramatic tension, which is what Nowell-Smith is particularly interested in) is exactly what we have at the end of *Hush-A-Bye-Baby.* The film's lack of closure, not so far from Nowell-Smith's schema, is quite distinct from the neater endings of films like *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* or *The Crying Game*, both of which have narratives where excess is central but both of which end on a note of resolution and containment (*The Crying Game*'s Fergus is in jail but redeemed, and while some of *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*'s characters are somewhat changed, everyone goes back to Montréal to live life more or less as they had before). In contrast to a Bordwellian schema of leaving no unanswered questions or a Rayian schema of choices avoided in favour of equilibrium, *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* leaves its main narrative thread dangling, making much clearer statements about the way nationalism ignores the needs of women or how Catholicism as a binding force creates more problems than it solves.

In addition to having certain inherent structural tensions, melodrama, it has been argued, is a seminal genre of urbanisation and modernisation. Contrasting the melodramatic perspective with traditionally aloof, bourgeois entertainment, Laura Mulvey writes that "[t]he early nineteenth-century melodrama presented a different moral and political perspective. The experience of the city presented dangers that needed to be represented, interpreted and understood by the poor undergoing the miseries and traumas of early industrial urbanisation" (70). Indeed, there is an argument to be made that *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* is not so far from the "city confidential" genre about which Will Straw writes, that I discussed in relation to *Jésus de Montréal*: both share a regional identity that was common to this cycle, and both take on the problems of city life (in the case of Derry, the tough, corrupt police that Straw writes about replaced by British squaddies). Missing from *Hush-A-Bye-Baby*, though, is a sense of Derry as a "lieu de perdition," as Loiselle wrote that Montréal is often shown to be; if anything, nationalist Derry is shown to have too much of the kind of values that rural traditionalists are supposed to treasure (an intact, unambiguous moral code, a clear sense of collective national identity, tightly knit communities, families that keep track of what you're doing and try to provide moral guidance, etc.). Indeed, Harkin is dropping Goretti right in the middle of very contentious arguments about modernity and identity, arguments for which the melodrama is particularly well suited, perhaps partially accounting for its popularity in countries whose colonial heritage, national identity or political structures are still unresolved. "The melodramatic is deeply embedded in Mexican and Hispanic culture and intersects with the three master narratives of Mexican society," writes Ana López, "religion, nationalism, and modernization." (256). These "master narratives" are also central to Irish and Québec culture, and I have been looking at them throughout this work; national identity and modernity are central in the work of Bob Quinn and Pierre Perrault, the split between rural and urban spaces and its relationship to North American, Québécois and Northern Irish identity is a defining tension in both Jacques Godbout's and John T. Davis' films and that sort of identity is at the very heart of *Maeve* and *Les Ordres*, the unfulfilled modernising promise of the Quiet Revolution has been a pre-occupation of Denys Arcand's career, and the lack of some move towards that kind of violence-free modernity is also an important part of both Cathal Black and Neil Jordan's films. None of these films are melodramas as such, but their thematic and ideological similarity to *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* is further illustration of the "in-between-ness" of Irish and Québec cinema that I have been trying to argue for throughout. None of these films can fully get away from the independent, semi-experimental legacy that is embodied by Jean-Pierre Lefebvre; neither, however, do they ever fully escape the legacy popular forms such as cinematic melodrama.

II. *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* and Alternatives to Narrative Cinema

But I have not, for the most part, discussed Irish and Québec cinema in terms of conventional narrative; neither, for that matter, have most commentators discussed *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* in terms of conventional genres like melodrama. Indeed, while it's important to recognise the conventional elements present in the film, it seems to me more organic to read it not so much as a radicalised melodrama as a moderate form of political cinema, closest, probably, to films like *Maeve* or *Les Ordres* but also sharing a great deal with the revisionist ethnography of Quinn and Perrault, the searching and unresolved political ruminations of Davis and Godbout, or the critical visions of the history of evolving nations that we see throughout Arcand, Black and in *Michael Collins*. It seems particularly relevant to examine aspects such as the integration of oppositional politics, the challenges posed to nationalist simplification, minor liberties taken with realist form, and the ordering of the narrative around a female subjectivity.

Although it is my contention that political details do not generally sit well in conventional narrative films (a contention that is influenced less by an agreement with Althusserian apparatus theory than with an essentially Bordwellian position that conventional Hollywood cinema prizes narrative clarity and simplicity and tends to download social matters onto individual characters), *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* engages quite explicitly with the politics not only of Northern Ireland but with Derry. Indeed, in the scene right before Goretti writes Ciaran to tell him she is pregnant, she walks by a giant wall that says "You Are Now Entering Free Derry." It is unlikely that viewers outside of the UK, or even outside Northern Ireland, would recognise the reference to Free Derry, a part of the Bogside neighbourhood that the IRA essentially took over in the 1970s; it became a kind of no-go zone for both the British Army and the RUC, with the IRA taking over routine policing and some other neighbourhood services. In interview with Megan Sullivan, Harkin recalled that "I have the main character walking alone by the Free Derry wall and seeing a lot of pregnant women. I quite deliberately had her walk there; she is not free. She has another kind of imprisonment from the men, but she's not free" (1997:44). As Luke Gibbons has recalled (1992), during the scene where Goretti is sitting on the beach in Donegal, tormented about what to do about her pregnancy, a blue fertiliser bag washes up on the shore. This is a specific reference to the "Kerry Babies" case, where a baby was found in a blue fertiliser bag, stabbed to death (the Gardaí forced a confession from a young single mother named Joanne Hayes, who did indeed turn out to have killed her baby, but that baby turned out to not be the baby that was found in the bag; what really happened was never discovered). Another sequence when Goretti and Ciaran are stopped by a British Army officer has a similar specificity to it. Most viewers would have some understanding of the army presence in Northern Ireland, but the officer asks Ciaran to spell his name, apparently trying to figure out if he is Catholic (Ciaran) or Protestant (Kieran); these kinds of identity markers are not a widely known aspect of life in Northern Ireland.

My task here is not to hunt for the little bits of "Irish Trivia" contained in *Hush-A-Bye-Baby*, but to show how the film does not use Derry, Northern Ireland or the Republic as a generic backdrop for the "real" narrative (as John Hill argues so many Northern Ireland films do vis-à-vis *film noir*, as I pointed out in discussing *The Crying Game*), but uses its landmarks and its political and social protocols as re-enforcements. Hill's gripe with (especially British) cinematic representations of "The Troubles" is that they often suppress local details, or only use them to keep the narrative clicking along; Lloyd, as we saw, has a similar argument about *The Crying Game*, arguing that Jordan simply gets the details wrong when the narrative demands it. But what we see in *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* is exactly the opposite; these little bits of political detail pop up when the narrative does not in any way demand it. The question about spelling the name is dropped and never returned to, and there is no narrative reason to have a shot of Goretti walking by the Free Derry wall. These kinds of sequences accomplish something similar to the sequence in *Les Ordres* where Clermont is told by a shopkeeper about that "*they*'re just trying to scare us," the sequence in *Maeve* where an elderly man tells a young Maeve to sell her "Free State buns" somewhere else, use of Georgian architecture or an over-determined menagerie in *Pigs*, or shots from *On est au coton* and references to a "local development grant" in *Gina*. They are all examples of political nuance seeping into a narrative film when there is no narratively compelling reason for it. Part of the reason I draw attention to this kind of nuance is to acknowledge that commercial, realist narrative cinema is a potentially flexible form; while I do indeed subscribe to the vision of realist form that is laid out by Bordwell et al. in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, many of the films I have looked at in this work are testaments to the potential for variation within an essentially Classical Hollywood form. Indeed, despite my occasionally pious anti-narrative attitude in this work, such variance is quite characteristic of the strand of cinema within Québec and Ireland that I have been discussing.

Furthermore, these political references are not only evoked with considerable detail, but are of a fairly oppositional character, another facet that flies in the face of the conventions of a capitalist or state-sponsored narrative cinema, and which as we have seen is also quite typical of cinema in both Ireland and Québec. Harkin is quite clear about the disruptive, invasive nature of the army presence in Northern Ireland. While the Irish-speaking squaddie does indeed seem to be a relatively nice, good-humoured guy, the soldiers in *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* are, for the most part, signifiers of dread. One clear although brief example of this is when Ciaran, after a date with Goretti, skips along cheerfully, only to have a solider come out from around a corner with a huge machine gun, stopping him; the constant references to friends, neighbours and family members who have been interned are equally clear indicators of this critical take on the military presence. And while it does not account for all of her misery, the invasive nature of the British prison authorities (they swoop down and intern men with no warning and no information, and then crack open Goretti's letter and destroy it when they cannot read it) is certainly shown to make life difficult in NI. Although Harkin has said that during the mid-to-late-80s (basically the period that comprised the lifespan of Derry Film and Video, whose organisational details I will discuss later), "[a]t the time we felt we were very much part of the Republican movement" (1997:43), both *Maeve* and *Les Ordres* are much harsher in terms of their critique of the brutalising nature of military and police force (and, most importantly, the inherent danger of blurring the boundaries between the two). *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* has no equivalent of the images in *Maeve* where the sqauddies make Maeve and her sister jump up and down so they can ogle them, or in *Les Ordres* where police arrest Clermont's wife in front of her three children purely because she doesn't know the location of her husband, whom they really want to arrest. But Harkin is critical on a level comparable to, say, Bob Quinn (whose film *Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoire* [1975] was funded by Official Sinn Féin, was critical of contemporary English cultural chauvinism and dealt with the history of colonial oppression in the 18th century) or Jacques Godbout (whose film *Le Sort d'amérique* [1996] is similarly unhappy but not exactly angry about the past and present of English domination of Québec).

But in addition to being critical of the Northern Ireland's "British problem," *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* is also quite critical of Irish nationalism itself. Indeed, this is exactly the critique that lies at the centre of *Maeve*: that despite their rhetoric of radicalism and talk of building a new society, Irish nationalists and Republicans have, like so many revolutionary organisations, often been as sexist and uninterested in the concerns of women as a British state might be. The criticisms *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* is making are never as explicit as what we see in the detached, avant garde sequences in *Maeve.* Harkin's swipes at Irish nationalism are scattered throughout the film. We see them in the scenes where mothers are clearly holding keeping a household together with little to no support from any of their now-imprisoned husbands' Republican comrades, or in scenes that show the impossibility of obtaining abortion services (or for that matter birth control), or in shots of the swaggering, macho young men in the community. Crucially, though, we see the psychological effects of a patriarchal Irish nationalism most explicitly when Goretti goes to the *Republic*, to spend a week in the Donegal Gaeltacht. It is there, after all, not in Derry, that she hears the radio broadcast about abortion where one of the panellists equates it with murder; in Derry, where there was no referendum to be had, it is an unspoken issue, and there is a sense that at that particular moment Goretti would choose unspoken anxiety over being made to feel like a potential murderer. It is also in the Republic that Goretti's feelings of alienation and aloneness become the most intense; on the bus trip from Derry to Donegal there is a shot of her in her seat as her non-synchronous voice-over (framed here as a sort of interior monologue) has her wondering why Ciaran didn't answer her letter, she has nightmares about the Virgin Mary while she's there, and the last shot of her in Donegal has her on the beach, alone after confessing her pregnancy to her best friend, upset and wondering what to do. Brian McIlroy writes that these sequences in the Republic "create an oppressive world for the teenager to whom the narrow political/republican issues are simply irrelevant" (1998:84). Far from being a kind of promised land that romantic nationalism would hold it to be, the Republic is here visualised as *particularly* upsetting and oppressive. This does not translate into a Unionism that argues women should look to a more liberal British mainland over the repressively conservative Republic, but it does amount to a substantial critique of the way that Irish nationalism has evolved.

What this amounts to is a kind of self-criticism, or "friendly critique," a political strategy that is visible in quite a bit of the work from Ireland and Québec that I have been discussing so far, and visible in a lot of Third cinema or anti-colonial work generally. Indeed, *Hush-A-Bye-Baby*'s political position is very close to Bill Marshall's reading of *Les Ordres*, which he sees as a film where "the main damage of the October crisis is seen to be a kind of national self-surveillance for Québec," as he recalls that all of the arrests, mock-executions and humiliating strip-searches are conducted in French by Francophones, not by English-speaking oppressors (41-2). And the films of Quinn and Perrault, while not entirely unrelated to a kind of nationalist return-to-the-roots, are also works of advocacy for populations that they portray as impoverished and marginalised by conventional, urban-chauvinist visions of the nation. Cathal Black is clearly aware of the violent nature of Ireland's colonial past, but he is not exactly optimistic about the possibilities for conventional Irish nationalism to fix these problems. And even though Canada's Anglophone power structure comes in for quite a drubbing in his documentary *Le Confort et l'indifférence* (1981) Arcand has spent almost his entire career evoking the pettiness and sheer nastiness of people who would hold themselves to be central to formation of Québec's post-Quiet Revolution culture and economy. The kind of criticism that we see throughout Québec and Irish cinema and in *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* reminds me very much of the critiques that define much of Third Cinema. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's film *Death of a Bureaucrat* (1966) is a satire on the ways that a nascent Cuban socialist bureaucracy tended to run amok, and Carlos Diegues' *Bye-Bye Brazil* (1979) was quite critical of the way that Brazil was modernising and so destroying the distinctiveness of rural areas (in a way that reminds me very much of Quinn and Perrault). What all of these films have in common with *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* is that they begin from an essentially nationalist or insurgent position but remain fundamentally independent in terms of political analysis, never throwing their hat fully in with a governmental or anti-government camp. Indeed, rather than portraying a simple, dualistic political struggle, all of these films are pre-occupied with the effects that various governmental and semi-governmental forces (be they the governments of Québec, Canada, the Republic, Northern Ireland, or the UK, or the IRA, the cotton industry, liberal landowners living on Achill island, etc.) have on individuals or small communities (islanders, women in nationalist Derry or Belfast, cotton workers, gay divorced men unable to survive except by welfare fraud, embittered Fenians fishing in Cavan and mad at the modernising plans of the early Republic, etc.). Indeed, I think that Fidelma Farley's contextualisation of *Anne Devlin*, a 1984 Pat Murphy film that I have not dealt with here, sums up the political project of a lot of the important films of Québec and Ireland's cinema. She writes that:

> Several films directed by women – for example, *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* (Margo Harkin, 1989, GB/Ireland), *The Visit* (Orla Walsh, 1992, Ireland) and Pat Murphy's first feature, *Maeve* (co-directed with John Davies, 1981, GB)[1] – focus attention on the operations of the politics of gender within the home, juxtaposing – not contrasting – them with the politics of national conflict. The issue underlying these films is whether the resolution of the "public" sphere will necessarily lead to a resolution of the "private" sphere – that is, if issues concerning women will be resolved if the political situation in Northern Ireland is resolved.
> (21)

Most of the films that I have looked at, like *Hush-A-Bye-Baby*, centralise the contrast between public and private spheres, and rather than try to reconcile them, insist on the necessary separateness of these spheres. Harkin's analysis here is not that feminist needs deserve priority over nationalist ones, and this is not the analysis of Murphy's *Maeve*, either. Similarly, films like *Mise Éire* or *Saorise?*, as we saw in the introduction, are implicitly arguing for a kind of supremacy for the Irish language over English in a way that is both unabashedly pro-State and historically revisionist (but not in the sense I talked about in chapter six, just in the sense of being inaccurate, since the Irish War for Independence was a mostly English-language affair), but this is not true of Bob Quinn's Irish-language films, and for that matter it is not true of Pierre Perrault's work vis-à vis the preservation of distinct dialects of French. Both of these filmmakers are levelling criticisms at, not offering endorsements of, a nationalist project with which in the final analysis they probably agree more than they differ.

Indeed, while I mentioned in the introduction my belief that post-colonial theory works quite a bit better for Irish culture than for Québec culture, the way that Harkin's film intersects with Frantz Fanon's deep pessimism about state building is relevant for most of the films I have been discussing. "Que le combat anti-colonialiste ne s'inscrive pas d'emblée dans une perspective nationaliste, c'est bien ce que l'histoire nous apprend" Fanon writes in *Les damnés de la terre* (189) [history clearly teaches us that the anti-colonial struggle does not unfold through a nationalist perspective]. That's an insight that most of the filmmakers under discussion here have internalised in one way or another, and it seems especially important given the emerging state and national formations that filmmakers in Ireland and Québec are working under. Although Pierre Falardeau's films (such as *Octobre* [1994] or *1837* [2000] and his video *Le Temps des bouffons* [1993]) are borderline militant in their nationalist analysis of Québec history, Gilles Groulx's *24 heures ou plus* (1977) is coming from a similar political space and Sinn Féin has produced films and videos,[2] this kind of work has not had the same impact on the local cultures that similar work has had in more traditional bastions of militant cinema such as Chile or Argentina.

Fanon writes, also in *Les damnées de la terre*, that "il faut s'opposer résolument à elle [la bourgeoisie locale] parce qu'à la lettre elle ne sert à rien" (217) [it is necessary to resolutely oppose {the local bourgeoisie} because they serve no purpose]. While he admits that "dans les pays sous-développées... il existe presque toujours un petit nombre d'intellectuels honnêtes" (219) [in underdeveloped countries... there almost always exists a small number of honest intellectuals], he is overall highly suspicious of the means by which post-colonial states are formed, more or less arguing that *plus ça change, plus la même chose*. This is a refrain that we have heard throughout Denys Arcand's work, and it is just as visible in *Hush-A-Bye-Baby*, which seems to wonder how much life for women would really change in a united Ireland. For Harkin and Murphy, the *damnées* are women, for Arcand they are mill-workers, and for Black they are little boys or anti-modernity Fenian fishermen. All of them illustrate, at any rate, Declan Kiberd's assessment that "[t]he history of independent Ireland bears a remarkable similarity, therefore, to the phases charted by Franz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*. In the early decades, the new leader soothed a frustrated people with endless recollections of the sacred struggle for independence" (552-3). Anxiety that this could come to pass is present in a number of Arcand's films, and we can see it in Jacques Godbout's work as well, especially *Le Sort d'amérique* and his 4½ hour *Québec: Le Mouton noir* (1992), both of which are quite critical of ways that Québec political leaders have used nostalgic, sometimes folkloric imagery of Québec life in their rhetoric, but both of which are more or less nationalist in their political orientation.

This kind of political position speaks to a kind of moderation that I have been discussing throughout this work, although I have been discussing it mostly in formal terms. While *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* is also a good example of this kind of formal moderation, it also offers a chance to illustrate how Irish and Québec cinema never really developed a substantial militant/political wing, just as they never really developed a substantial avant garde sector. Indeed, reading the secondary literature around *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* one gets the sense that it is a considerably more radical film than it really is; most of the critical work on the film is of a descriptive nature, pointing out the ways that the film shows how women have terrible lives in nationalist Derry.[3] Questions of genre (melodrama, more or less adhered to), form (realism, more or less adhered to) are seldom addressed, and although there seems to be an underlying assumption that it is part of Ireland's "women's cinema," (most of the articles on the film compare it with both *Maeve* and Orla Walsh's short film *The Visit*, which is about a wife of an IRA prisoner who gets pregnant by another man), matters of international context are seldom addressed either. I have so far tried to show that matters of form and genre are in fact crucial to an understanding of *Hush-A-Bye-Baby*; matters of context are just as important, and in this case the example of women's cinema in Québec provides some ways of filling the holes that I think some of the secondary literature on this film leave.

Chantal Nadeau, for example, has dealt with the evolution of Québec's feminist cinema in a way that, although I think it is needlessly pessimistic, explains a lot about *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* in particular and Irish and Québec cinema in general. In lamenting the insufficiently radical turn of 80s Québec feminist cinema as embodied by Léa Pool, she writes that "[t]o be sure, women are present in Pool's films, just as men are, but their representation can hardly be considered as a call for a female gaze, one which would allow for an ennunciative strategy likely to break with the conventions of a male gaze" (1992:14).[4] Compare this to Martin McLoone's overall very positive assessment of *Hush-A-Bye-Baby*, which he recalls "is centrally involved in Goretti's predicament – the narrative does not follow Ciaran to prison – and so it asks its questions from within women's politics and women's culture" (2000:149). For the Québec critic, the presence of women is not even close enough for a viable feminist cinema; for an Irish critic, the centrality of female subjectivity is a significant step forward. The Québec critic laments the fact that the classical cinematic/Mulvey-esque gaze isn't subverted quite enough; the Irish critic accepts without question that this is a film with a single central character, also a crucial aspect of realist cinematic form about whose ideological costs and impositions much ink has been spilled. Part of this is because Québec simply has more feminist filmmakers than Ireland, and my omission of them leaves a hole in my overall project (although that project was never to write a comprehensive narrative history of Irish and Québec cinema). One of the reasons that I did not deal with this body of work is because it does not compare particularly well to its equivalents in Irish cinema. There is a considerable gap between films by Anne-Claire Poirier or Micheline Lanctôt and films by Pat Murphy or Margo Harkin. In the introduction and in my chapter on Jean-Pierre Lefebvre I argued against simple comparisons of Québec cinema with French cinema; sticking to that position, I would point out at this juncture that these Québec feminist filmmakers are quite a bit closer to *Belgian* filmmakers like Agnès Varda or (in the case of the anti-realist-form Poirier especially) Chantal Akerman than to Harkin, Pat Murphy or Orla Walsh.

This is not only a formal gap, but also a broader, perhaps more narrative-based one of explicit political engagement. While I do indeed think there is an interesting link between *Maeve* and Poirier's roughly contemporary 1979 film *Mourir à tue-tête* (as I discussed in chapter four), there are fewer Irish links to be made with Poirier's poetic, semi-documentary examinations of women's lives such as *De mère en fille* (1968) or *Les filles de roi* (1974); in some ways these are actually closer to the essay films of John T. Davis or Jacques Godbout. Furthermore, while most of Micheline Lanctôt's films, like Léa Pool's, are formally straightforward in a way that is not unlike *Hush-A-Bye-Baby*, *The Visit* or *Anne Devlin*, most of this work is brooding, female-centred psychodrama that is nowhere near as explicitly engaged with nuts-and-bolts feminist politics as are the Irish films (or Poirier's films, for that matter).[5] Indeed, the tension between feminism and nationalism that defines most Irish feminist film making is often absent in Québec feminist cinema. Nadeau has lamented this lack, writing that "[i]t is as if the discourses on sexuality, femininity, and desire that clearly map a substantial trajectory through the films made by women in Québec could in no case be visibly informed by a reflection on national identities" (1999:197). This disappointment is closely related to her impatience with Léa Pool's cinema, which she sees as "a series of variations on a single theme – the intimate drama of the existential quest – in which the Other, to be sure, appears human, all too human. Thus, it has to be argued that Pool's films elude the tensions between representation and self-representation of sexual difference in women's cinema" and are therefore not really feminist (1992:15). I'm not sure that "the tensions between representation and self-representation of sexual difference" are really present in *Hush-A-Bye-Baby*, and I think that Nadeau is a bit too demanding and limiting in her analysis of Québec's feminist cinema. But I also think that she is raising some interesting questions about the relationship between feminist and nationalist concerns, and I think that she would find that many of her concerns are addressed in this Irish work. *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* may not have the formal characteristics often associated with women's cinema, but the explicit way in which it deals with political matters is something we do not see in a lot of Québec's feminist cinema, even if the North American work may more easily suggest parallels with important filmmakers like Varda, Akerman or Laura Mulvey.

In this way, *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* is also closer to the work I have looked at so far than a lot of Québec's feminist cinema, and this is a big part of why I have chosen to look at it in isolation, and not in the context of Québec's women's cinema as a whole. Its explicit political engagement is close to a lot of what we see in films by Quinn, Perrault, Arcand, Black, Murphy, Brault, Davis, Godbout and even Neil Jordan, all of whom are often dealing with local issues in considerable detail. Its adherence-but-not-quite to the demands of women's cinema recalls the counter-cinema-but-not-quite qualities of *Maeve* and *Les Ordres*, the ethnographic-but-not-quite qualities of Quinn and Perrault, or the narrative-but-not-quite qualities of early Arcand and all of Black. Overall, *Hush-A-Bye-Baby*'s relationship to non-mainstream cinema is quite indicative of a lot of Québec and Irish cinema's relationship with cinematic conventions of any kind; it is a moderate but serious dissenter. Neither entirely narrative nor entirely avant-garde, the film exists somewhere in the middle.

III. *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* and collective production

Much the same is true of the film's relationship with non-traditional modes of production. The fact that it was produced by Derry Film and Video, according to the video's package "a Channel 4 workshop franchised under the ACTT [Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians] workshop declaration" might at first seem to place it squarely in the realm of the British Workshop Movement, which John Caughie has noted "became institutionalised with the arrival of Channel 4, but had its roots in the politics of collective practice associated with 1968 and feminism" (163). I would argue, though, that the film is also quite close to the NFB/ONF's "Challenge for Change" and "Société Nouvelle" programs, whose films are more difficult to pin down in terms of authorship than the British co-op and community-based media to which Caughie refers. This ambiguity is closely related to the film's tension between didactic and aesthetic impulses; tensions which are also present in the Challenge for Change and Société Nouvelle work with which I wish to draw a parallel and in most of the films that I have been talking about in this study so far. Resistant to both a traditional auteurist reading and a single-minded focus on the community in which it was made, *Hush-A-Bye-Baby*'s ambiguity around authorship is another example of what I have been arguing is a crucial tendency in Irish and Québec cinema: the film that is resistant of convention, but not too resistant.

Challenge for Change and its French-language counterpart Société Nouvelle were set up in 1967, and sought to make film, and later video, more accessible and part of the everyday life of Canadians. Part of the impetus for the program came partially from the reception of Tanya Ballentine's film *The Things I Cannot Change* (1967). A portrait of the Baileys, a family in Montréal where the mother was always pregnant and the father always unemployed, it had activist aspirations but ended up embarrassing the family horribly, eventually forcing them to move. This led to an interest on the part of the NFB/ONF in a more genuinely collaborative process of film making, one that might break down barriers between filmmakers and subjects. "The participatory process was conceived as a means to counter both the objectification of earlier ethnographic approaches and the aestheticism of an emerging auteurist tendency at the NFB (mainly in Québec)," writes Janine Marchessault, summing up the project's goals (135).

These were goals shared by the UK's workshop movement, although there were some crucial differences, differences that make this UK example much more emblematic of film production as a whole than Challenge for Change/Société Nouvelle. Film production workshops began to appear in significant numbers in the 1970s, constituted as operations that would produce films about community-oriented issues and community activists learn to produce them on their own. The "ACTT Workshop Declaration," John Caughie writes, was "[a]n agreement between the ACTT... The British Film Institute and Channel 4... [which] accredited a number of 'franchised workshops,' recognising them for the production of commissioned work for Channel 4 at lower than normal rates and crewing levels" (163). Marsha Emerman, in her profile of the workshop movement's impact on Northern Ireland, notes that "stress is also placed on 'integrated practice,' that is, combining production with distribution, exhibition, training, and education"; she also notes that the workshops were required to be "organised along cooperative lines" and pay at least four people a living salary (41n1). So while the original impetus was to empower people to make media about their own lives, the British workshop movement was, in vivid contrast to similar initiatives in the United States, Canada and Québec, lined up quite closely with professional (unionised, after all) filmmaking. Indeed, Rod Stonemann (the current head of Bord Scannán na hÉireann and former commissioning editor at Channel 4, and so responsible for funding, and eventually de-funding, the workshop movement) has written that "[p]art of the adjacent history of these movements was an earlier initiative to nationalize the entire British film industry;

the ACCT [*sic*, he means ACTT, which he credits in a footnote] published a report (that might be fairly characterized as ultra-left in origin and strategy) in the early seventies which proposed that the entire British industry should come into public ownership under workers' control" (1992:132). So while part of the workshop movement's energy emanated from activist idealism, it was also rooted in a desire to re-shape UK cinema as a whole, an aspiration that seemed to define Channel 4. The workshops were primarily in Great Britain, although two Northern Irish ones became quite well known: Belfast Independent Video, and Derry Film and Video.

Indeed, Derry Film and Video could be seen as the seminal Channel 4 workshop, although it differs from that model of community empowerment in some important ways. McIlroy has summed up the history of the workshop in a passage that is worth quoting at length:

> Derry Film and Video came to public attention in the early 1980s, due in large part to the liberal policies of Channel 4 in the United Kingdom. The channel's brief to give preference to diverse production companies was seen in most quarters as innovative. Ironically, this massive decentralisation as the organising principle for a major television broadcaster was linked to the competitive, capitalistic ideology heralded by Thatcherism, yet it also paved the way for the empowerment of previously marginalised groups. With reference to the latter, the workshop's use of broadcast and non-broadcast quality video not only brought in many former technophobes, but also raised awareness that serious issues could be tackled and productions disseminated. One of the central thrusts of the workshop was to examine women's experiences within a political framework.
> (1998:126)

This passage neatly encapsulates the issues that are relevant to the Québec-Irish comparison that I want to make. Like the capitalist/de-centralisation tension of the establishment of Channel 4, *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* seems to be a community-based film, but it actually springs from a semi-commercial initiative. Furthermore, it is an interesting hybrid of community-media aesthetic strategies (like the kind you might see in a work that used non-broadcast quality video), televisual aesthetics, and narrative cinema, a tension that is present both in other UK workshop films of the same period (such as work by Isaac Julian or John Akomfrah from the Sankofa workshop) and in Challenge for Change and Société Nouvelle programs, but that also speaks to an ambiguity between film and television, and documentary and fiction, that is important to Irish and Québec cinema as a whole.

Although images of Northern Ireland could be said to be reaching the saturation point (as I discussed in chapter four), film making in the province is actually quite difficult, and has been the subject of numerous attempts at re-vitalisation (or, more exactly, vitalisation). The energy for most of the recent film making initiatives in Northern Ireland can be traced back to a 1988 report called *Fast Forward*, commissioned by the Independent Film, Video and Photography Association and highly critical of the televisual and cinematic infrastructure in Northern Ireland, especially in comparison to what was available in the Republic or in the rest of the UK. This led to the establishment of the Northern Ireland Film Council (NIFC) in 1989, a period that is marked by a de-centralisation in arts funding throughout the UK, a de-centralisation that shares a great deal with the regionalisation programs that helped to encourage Canadian and Québec programs like Challenge for Change or Société Nouvelle. But unlike these North

American programs, the NIFC was a semi-commercial body with a broad public-oriented remit, sort of an amalgamation of Telefilm Canada, the NFB/ONF, and SODEC. Like Channel 4, whose foundation was as an independently constituted, publicly-funded and semi-commercial broadcaster, it sought to support both activist works that would otherwise find no exhibition or production funding at all and small, low-budget feature films that could contribute to the formation of an indigenous cinematic tradition, one that had a close relationship, but was not necessarily synonymous, with television.

Derry Film and Video, then, is an embodiment of this amalgamation, and *Hush-A-Bye-Baby*'s status as a "workshop film" presents some complications in terms of authorship. McIlroy recounts how "[f]or over two years, the script of *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* was developed with local people, drama workshops and interviews with Irish women who had experienced pregnancy outside marriage" (1998:82). Furthermore, Harkin has recalled how "[w]hen we ask people to collaborate with us, if they have been abused in the past, we have very openly offered them the right to veto how they are used" (Emerman 43), a right that Colin Low also extended to the participants in his Fogo Island films (1966-69), the flagship production for the Challenge for Change program. This sounds like the stuff of grass-roots political film making that allows non-filmmakers to make media about their everyday lives, the kind of which the workshop movement was supposed to enable, and which was the core project of Challenge for Change and Société Nouvelle. But while I will go on to argue that *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* should be seen as a workshop film, I think it is important to recognise that it is just as possible to read it in a more traditional way, locating Margo Harkin as the author of the film. Clearly the film's community roots make questions of authorship complicated, but I do not think any more complicated than they were in the case of Bob Quinn, Cathal Black, Denys Arcand, or Michel Brault, all of whom made films that were based on discussions with people on whose lives they were loosely based (I have in mind here *Poitín*, *Our Boys*, *Gina*, and *Les Ordres*).

Indeed, I think the best point of comparison as regards the authorship question is with Pierre Perrault's l'Île-aux-Coudres films, especially *Pour la suite du monde*. I think of that as a "Pierre Perrault" film and treat it as such in chapter two, but it has plenty of authorship complications. Michel Brault's rôle in the process is one; the groundwork laid by Perrault in the Radio-Canada series *Au Pays de Neufve France* (1959), which he *did not* direct (he wrote the text) is another, and another still is the role that the islanders themselves played in the re-construction of the porpoise hunt. *Pour la suite du monde* was clearly a highly collaborative endeavour, and it would make no sense to ignore that fact in a discussion of the film. Scott MacKenzie has written of the dissolution of Société Nouvelle's idealism of interactivity, using Anne-Claire Poirier as an example. He writes that "[w]hile Sociéte Nouvelle went on to produce a variety of politically engaged films, such as Anne-Claire Poirier's *Les Filles du Roy* (1974) and the 'En tant que femmes series,' these works moved closer to the traditions of politically engaged European art cinema and away from the early principles of Société Nouvelle" (1996:79). I take MacKenzie's point here, that the program's goals seemed to shift from the political to the aesthetic. But I would point to filmmakers like Chris Marker and the collective productions he worked on in the 1970s, Godard and some of the collective films he worked on in the 1970s, Hungary's Márta Mészáros and the memoir films she made in the 1980s, figures that complicate a politics/activist film and aesthetics/art film binary, a binary that has also never really held together in Québec or Ireland. What I would argue is that "European Art Cinema" is useful as a term if you want to discuss a binary between Hollywood and the French New Wave, or Hollywood and Federico Fellini; it is less useful for discussions of marginal cinemas, like Ireland's or Québec's, where these lines tend to be blurrier, and where these lines tend to cross one another. Just as it is still reasonable to think of *Pour la suite du monde* as a "Pierre Perrault" film at the same time that it is necessary to acknowledge its collaborative elements, I think it reasonable to think of *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* as a "Margo Harkin" film at the same time that it is a community-based film produced by Derry Film and Video.

And the first work produced by Derry Film and Video, Anne Crilly's documentary *Mother Ireland* (1988), has some important similarities with *Hush-a-Bye-Baby*. *Mother Ireland* became something of a *cause célèbre* when it was kept from being shown on British TV because it violated the recently instituted ban on transmission of the voices of members of any "proscribed organisation," such as the IRA (the guidelines were instituted on 19 October 1988, partially in response to the furor surrounding the BBC documentary *Death on the Rock*; see Pettitt 1999:207-14). It dealt with the history of women in Irish nationalism, echoing the concerns of films like *Maeve* or *Anne Devlin* but adopting a didactic, talking-heads documentary format. Shot on broadcast-standard video, *Mother Ireland* technically met the standards of mainstream television but nevertheless had a distinctly rambling and almost grubby look to it. It is not a formally sophisticated work; it is primarily about putting forth an argument about the ways that Irish women have been written out of history, in a way that is very similar to how *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* is not as interested in form as it is in clear exposition of the difficulties women face in nationalist Ireland.

There are two ways to interpret this shared formal indifference in these two examples of Northern Irish film development: political and commercial. Alan Lovell has grumbled about the realist tendencies of workshop films, linking them to the realist political documentaries of the 1930s. "An uncritical acceptance of community art ideas of the 1960s, with their insistence that authentic representations could only be achieved by oppressed groups themselves. The consequences were not happy ones for workshop productions," he writes.

> A "degree zero" documentary form came to inhabit the schedules of Eleventh Hour and People to People: the subject – oppression of one kind or another; the structure – talking heads interspersed with vaguely illustrative material; presentation – low key and undramatic; politics – a softish version of hard left positions.
> (104)

Lovell also complains, though, that films by the Sankofa and Black Audio workshops were too arty, comparing them to late Godard and writing that "I don't think that [the Sankofa and Black Audio] films... escaped from the dead ends of 1970s aesthetics" (105). His polemic, written just as the workshop movement was sinking in the wake of Channel 4's decision to withdraw funding, illustrates, if nothing else, just how many interior conflicts the movement faced. But Brian McIlroy takes a much more optimistic approach to these films' realist tendencies (1998:128), linking *Mother Ireland* with Julia Lesage's theorisation of the feminist documentary; I find this much more compelling than Lovell's complaint, theoretically informed though it may be. Lesage sees the real power of a lot of 1970s documentaries (such as collectively produced films like *Self Health* [1974] and *The Women's Film* [1971]) as lying in their recognisable, straightforward form, writing that "if the feminist filmmakers deliberately used a traditional 'realist' documentary structure, it is because they saw making these films as an urgent public act and wished to enter the 16mm circuit of educational films, especially through libraries, schools, churches, unions, and YWCAs, to bring feminist analysis to many women it might otherwise not reach" (223). While Lesage has elsewhere expressed a great deal of sympathy for more politicised avant garde practices, she locates a clarity and simplicity in these films that speaks to a politicised populism. Much the same is true of a lot of Third World melodrama; the Mexican film *Maria Candalaria*, which draws attention to the plight of the indigenous underclass, or the Indian film *Coolie* (1983), which draws attention to the wretched of India through a song, dance, and romance formula that was recognisable to Indian audiences (where it was hugely popular) are good examples of this kind of populist clarity. And so while I do think that Harkin's use of conventional form was about "getting the word out" in the way that Lesage invokes, it was also about building a semi-commercial cinema in Northern Ireland, a process that is often kept separate from more activist models of workshop film making. Indeed, D.B. Jones sees this as part of the undoing of the Challenge for Change and Société Nouvelle programs, pointing out that Colin Low's Fogo Island series "was not a cost-effective model. Traditionally, films have seemed to make economic sense when used as mass communication. Twenty-three films useful mainly to a small community of five thousand people constituted very expensive social change. It is true that the films were used widely, but they were interesting to national and international audiences mainly for their prototypical value, as examples" (164). Harkin is very much recovering the "mass communication" character of the workshop project, by making a film that is formally recognisable, potentially viewable if not at a YMCA then on television.

And the ability to get onto television has been directly equated by Harkin with political value. "We made the film for television *because* we were a workshop" she told Sullivan. "I didn't want just to talk to an already politicized audience, so getting on television was the absolute goal" (1997:45, italics mine). If *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* sometimes feels like a "movie of the week," that's because that's exactly what it was. The use of that term as a pejorative is, by and large, a result of the strict separation between film and television that has been a product of a set of economic and institutional conditions that are fairly specific to the United States. While both Ireland and Québec have the kind of alternative exhibition sphere that Lesage would recognise (perhaps more so in Québec), television is very much part of that sphere in a way that it is not in the United States, whose film culture Lesage was addressing.[6] It is also part of people's everyday lives, in a way that in some communities a church, union hall, or YWCA might be (or might have been). Defending television from cinematic purists, Stoneman writes that "[t]he domestic is the primary site of the audiovisual for most people at the end of the twentieth century, especially for, say, a single mother living in a rural setting far from a cinema" (1996:120). Stoneman's invocation of the domestic, of course, suggests a link to that most domestic of conventional genres, the melodrama; part of the value of the melodramatic form is indeed the way that it gives voice to domestic concerns, and for this reason it has been the site of a great deal of feminist critical work. And just as some of those critics (such as Nowell-Smith, as we have already seen) would argue that melodrama's formal and structural characteristics in fact make it a highly progressive genre, televisual status, and the compromises that status may demand in terms of length, narrative structure or formal choices, is in fact a crucial part and not a qualifier of *Hush-A-Bye-Baby*'s status as a political work. Like the break between European Art Cinema and activist film making, this status as TV also draws attention to the fact that Québec and Irish cinema are more open to compromise and hybridity than traditional models based in the situation of cinema in the United States would allow.

Indeed, *Hush-A-Bye-Baby*'s status as a partially televisual production is also a crucial part of its importance to an understanding of Irish and Québec cinema's institutions. Again, part of this is political, part of it commercial. Writing in 1994, then-director of the Northern Ireland Film Council Geraldine Wilkins characterised her organisation's relationship with TV as follows:

> [...I]n the Northern Ireland context a discussion of film production cannot ignore the role of the broadcasters, especially given the relative lack of government support for feature production in the UK generally and NI in particular. Local broadcasters have not so far been involved in supporting film features (except very modestly as in the case of Ulster Television's interest in *December Bride*, 1990) [this has since begun to change]. However, if the BBC NI's drama productions (at least those shot in Northern Ireland) are taken into account, there is certainly some truth in the adage that "of course there's a film industry here – it's called the BBC." This is one of the many reasons why the current debate over the BBC charter is so vital. For what is at stake here is a large element of the regional industry infrastructure.
> (143)

Wilkins', and so to some extent the NIFC's, take on the Film-TV relationship is centrally related, then, to infrastructure development. Indeed, this emphasis on infrastructure is echoed by Robert Cooper, director of television drama for BBC Northern Ireland. Ironically, as Northen Ireland's film commissioner looks to TV, and BBC Northern Ireland specifically, that head of BBC Northern Ireland looks to film, writing in 1996 that:

> The recent creative blossoming which has taken place in the Republic as a result of the Irish government's far-sighted policy has been extraordinary. It has been achieved by an integrated financial approach to the problem, i.e. a properly funded Irish Film Board with £3 million per annum to invest in development and production, the government's active encouragement of and involvement in the industry through the Ministry of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht plus tax incentives for corporate and private investors to invest in the industry under section 35 of the finance act.
> (208)

I would like to point out here that even though he is involved in television, all of the initiatives that Cooper so enviously invokes have to do with film production; Radio Telefís Éireann, his counterpart in the Republic of Ireland, is not even mentioned. I discussed in the introduction how in Canada, Québec and the

Republic of Ireland, different sorts of infrastructures were developed by different kinds of organisations, some televisual (CBC, Radio-Canada, RTÉ, TnaG/TG4) and some more oriented towards film as such (Telefilm Canada, SODEC, SOGIC, NFSI, BSÉ). What I think we see in Northern Ireland in the late 1980s and into the early 1990s is a collapsing of these institutions; film and television are so intertwined that it's difficult to talk about one without talking about the other. There's an argument to be made that this is simply the consequences of decades upon decades of cinematic underdevelopment (alongside other kinds of underdevelopment, of course). But what's equally useful to discuss is that *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* was produced within an institutional context whose interconnection between film and TV serves as a kind of allegory for the organisation of many smaller national cinemas, such as Ireland or Québec.

Conclusion

While *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* is an important film in its own right, what I have tried to do here is show only how it illuminates certain crucial issues that have been part of my ongoing examination of Irish and Québec cinema. By looking at the ways the film handles genre and conventional form, the ways that it suggests new paths for alternative cinematic practices, and the ways that it negotiated a complex web of institutional concerns, we have seen, I think, that it is a work that embodies a spirit of compromise. I have tried to show throughout this work that for a variety of reasons (some economic, some historical or political, some, I suspect, just the product of the idiosyncrasies of various filmmakers) the cinemas of Québec and Ireland have avoided the poles that are often established by a view of film history that is based in binaries that seem to me very specific to the cinema of the United States (New American Cinema vs. Old Hollywood Cinema) or of a few Western European countries (European Art Cinema vs. Crass American Cinema). It is difficult (although not impossible) to find a fully avant-garde practice in Ireland or Québec, just as it is difficult (although not impossible) to find an unambiguously commercial one. The important films in these national cinema are more defined by a combination of these elements, a combination that very clearly visible in *Hush-A-Bye-Baby*.

Notes:

1. Why *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* and *The Visit* are classified as from "GB/Ireland" and "Ireland" respectively but *Maeve* is just from "GB" is not clear to me.

2. On Sinn Féin's use of video, see John Roberts, "Sinn Fein and Video," *Screen* 29:2 (Spring 1988), 94-97. On Falardeau's videos, see Scott MacKenzie, "Mimetic Nationhood: Ethnography and the National," in Mette Hjort and MacKenzie, eds., *Cinema and Nation* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 239-57. Indeed, there is certainly a good case to be made that whatever militant cinema we see in Irish and Québec cinema exists primarily on video.

3. There is very little discussion of form in the literature around *Hush-A-Bye-Baby* or *The Visit*, and I suspect this is partially because the task of squaring conventional form with oppositional politics is one that requires a certain engagement with theoretical and historical work specific to Film Studies, work that has not yet found its way into Irish Studies. This is true of Megan Sullivan's work (1997, 1999a) and of Elizabeth Butler-Cullingford's article "Gender, Sexuality and Englishness in Modern Irish Drama and Film" in the anthology *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Ireland* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), pp.159-86. The exception to this is Fidelma Farley's monograph on *Anne Devlin*, which does engage with some Film Studies work done by feminists, but which considerably overstates the way the film is part of a tradition of counter-cinema. Reading this critical work, I felt like the film they were all really talking about was *Maeve*, which is indeed a work of counter-cinema, with a very odd, oppositional formal strategy. While I do not wish to succumb to turf-wars, I do think that these problems stem partially from the fact that at least in North America many Irish Studies scholars are interested in Irish Cinema, while very few Cinema Studies scholars are interested in Irish Cinema (this is less the case in Britain and Ireland).

4. Teresa de Lauretis has similar complaints with North American women's cinema of the 1980s, especially with the portrayal of sex in Lizzie Borden's *Working Girls* (1988) and of lesbianism in Patricia Rozema's *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing* (1987). Her take on the Borden film strikes me as especially similar to Nadeau on Pool: "it is not that *Working Girls* is 'unaestheticized,' as some critics have alleged of *Born in Flames*, but rather that it is *anaestheticized*: it is dry, distant and neutral as the latex sex it mercilessly depicts, finally representing sex work as the negation, not of sex, but of female desire itself" (14, emphasis hers). A more engagé women's cinema embodies or gives voice to female desire, it seems, as opposed to negating it. See her "Guerrilla in the Midst: Women's Cinema in the 80s," *Screen* 31:1 (Spring 1990), 6-25; it is a very general survey of women's cinema of the 1980s, and although she does not mention the film specifically, many of the issues she explains are relevant to *Hush-A-Bye-Baby*, and to Ireland and Québec's narrative-heavy feminist cinema generally.

5. I have in mind here Pool's *La demoiselle sauvage* (1991) or Lanctôt's *L'homme à tout faire* (1980) and *Sonatine* (1983); her 1993 film *Deux Actrices* is a possible exception to this, being somewhat Brechtian in form (the narrative is cross-cut with video footage of the actors about the process of making the film), although still not as explicitly political as the Irish films I am discussing here. Peter Harcourt has discussed the variance in Lanctôt's political engagement in his 1999 article on her.

6. Julia Lesage has done a great deal of work with community television/cable access in the United States, and her own videos (such as *El Crucero* [1988]) have been partially funded by Chicago's Centre for New Television. But this kind of work does not really approach the popular possibilities that are embodied by a broadcaster such as Channel 4. A possible UK-US parallel would be the Independent Television Service, established by an act of Congress in 1990 that is nominally part of PBS but operates at an arm's length. The ITVS is supposed to encourage the production of independent film that can then be broadcast on PBS and used in community settings (they have a significant outreach budget). But that's the subject of another study.

Conclusion

The internationalist but culturally rooted cinema that I, following Paul Willemen, invoked in the introduction, has been the main topic of this dissertation. The films that I have been discussing are, in varying degrees, critical of formal conventions and possessed of a restless sensibility. At their most fully realised, these films have been concerned with "summing up and reformulating the encounter of diverse cultural traditions into new, politically as well as cinematically illuminating types of filmic discourse, critical of, yet firmly anchored in, their respective social-historical situations," as Willemen wrote of Indian Ritwik Ghatak, Senegalese Ousmane Sembene, and Bazilian Nelson Pierra dos Santos. And these films I have discussed have also challenged the generic and institutional traditions, evincing a pronounced subjectivity in the format of state-sponsored or state-financed documentary (Perrault, Quinn, Godbout, Davis, Arcand, and Black) or breaking down boundaries between the narrative, avant garde and political film making (Lefebvre, Murphy, Brault, Black, Arcand, Jordan, and Harkin). While these filmmakers are not necessarily emblematic of film making in Ireland or Québec, their relationships with conventions of various kinds speak to a condition of being "minor," and that "minor" status does seem to be at the core of Irish and Québec cinema, given the economic realities of a Hollywood-dominated global cinematic landscape.

By way of conclusion, though, I want to pull back from an examination of specific filmmakers and engage briefly with polemical statements from both Ireland and Québec which concern the present status or future of the national cinema as a whole. These statements are often related to the kinds of films I have discussed here, engaging with cultural specificity, language, and genre. But they are also relevant to the shifts that world cinema as a whole is currently experiencing. By looking at attempts to assess the recent history of and plot a rough course for these national cinemas, I think that we can see an encapsulation of many of the arguments that have defined this dissertation, arguments about the push and pull between globalisation and localism, genre and innovation, industry vs. culture, and similar problems.

The winter 2001 issue of the Québec film magazine *24 Images* featured a midsection called "Le cinéma québécois aux rayons X" that deals with many of the important formal and ideological issues that are simmering just beneath the surface of Québec cinema. In a short piece called "Bavardages," Yves Rousseau identifies "le cinéma de la communication," "communication cinema," which he sees as typical of a lot of world cinema. He writes that:

> Produit international, le cinéma de la communication c'est *The Cell* mais aussi Luc Besson, Tom Twyker, Robert Lepage. Sorte d'espéranto audiovisuel, le cinéma de la communication se tourne de nouveau vers le muet, un muet bourré de musique et d'explosions, d'effets spéciaux et d'oralité. Nous ne pouvons pas nous payer les explosions, restent la musique et l'oralité. Or, de toute évidence, la langue québécoise pose problème face au marché mondial. Elle reste une langue rebelle, à la fois trop verbale et pas assez exotique, même pour le reste du marché francophone.
> (17)
>
> [An international product, communication cinema is *The Cell*, but also Luc Besson, Tom Twyker, Robert Lepage. A sort of audiovisual Esperanto, communication cinema is oriented again towards the silent cinema, a silent cinema filled with music and explosions, special effects and orality. We can't pay for explosions, so all that's left is music and orality. But, obviously, the Québécois language poses a problem in a world market. It remains a rebel-language, simultaneously too verbal and not exotic enough, even for the rest of the French-speaking market.]

This vision of an internationalised cinema defined more by explosions and special effects than by the rambling orality of Perrault's cinéma de la parole is very close to what Luke Gibbons warned against in the pages of *Film Ireland*, writing about an "Esperanto of the eye" that combined both the cultural distinctiveness associated with independent cinema and the easy, straightforward visual form and narrative structure associated with Hollywood. That article was more informed by the aesthetic and thematic imperatives of a unified Europe, as opposed to the broader forces of English-language-dominated globalisation that Rousseau is addressing, but I still think that there is a connection between their concerns about the importance of visuality in cinema.

Their analysis may seem very similar; what seems to happen in both "Euro-cinema" and "communication cinema" is that distinctive aspects of a culture tend to be left out, in favour of images that can be easily transported into any socio-cultural context at all. But Gibbons actually argues that it is precisely from visuality that a resistance to this kind of homogenisation can be launched. He writes that "[t]he opticality of cinema, and the willingness to let the image do the work associated with the best of East European and Scandinavian cinema, is evident in films as diverse as Thaddeus O'Sullivan's *December Bride*, Joe Comerford's *High Boot Benny*, Cathal Black's *Korea* and Paddy Breathnach's *Ailsa*" (1996c:22). Partially due to the way that they centralise specifics of Irish culture and politics (the awkward place Ulster Protestants have in Irish culture in *December Bride*, the problems along the border with NI in *High Boot Benny*, or, as we saw in chapter five, the legacy of the Civil War in *Korea*; *Ailsa*, which has nothing particular to do with Irish culture, is an exception here), these films were all much less widely distributed internationally than Robert Lepage's. But they lean just as heavily on visuals, and that visuality in no way compromises their distinctiveness or unfriendliness to capitalist/globalised distribution. I would agree with Gibbons that visuality in fact contributes greatly to this status. So while I see what Rousseau is getting at with his moderately angry polemic against a glossy, anti-local cinema that Québec cinema seems to be buying into at its own peril, I do not think that this is clearly a formal or linguistic problem. I am much more persuaded by Gibbons' take on the importance of visuality, which sees the impulse not as an inherent gateway to a bland globalised film making (as Rousseau seems to, though his focus on special effects and explosions), but as a tool to be used in service of a Willemen-esque duality between the rooted and the internationalist.

I mentioned in the introduction how Dominique Noguez has argued that one of the reasons that avant garde cinema has never been much of a force in Québec is because of its disengagement with orality, so important to the foundation of that national cinema; I think we are seeing something of a turn-around there, and Robert Lepage presents an interesting example. He has made films, quite widely seen in Québec and abroad, that because they depend more on the subtleties of visual language than spoken language might seem likely to occupy a comfortable place in a globalised network of image circulation. But his films actually show how a simple dichotomy between "visual=global / oral=local" is inadequate, since they centrally integrate distinct aspects of Québec culture. *Le*

Confessionale (1995) is a very sharp-looking film that is certainly interesting as a study in the ways people keep secrets across generations, but someone familiar with the legacy of the Duplessis regime would certainly get a lot more out of flashbacks to 1950s Québec City than someone who only recognised the Hitchcock film *I Confess* being filmed there. Similarly, *Nô* (1998) is certainly easy to understand as an ensemble piece about people fumbling around blindly for human connection (and the blind Japanese interpreter, the only person in the film really successful in love – her boyfriend is an awkward English-Canadian – makes for a very clear metaphor there), but it is hard to make full sense of it without an understanding *both* of the October Crisis and the cultural importance of Montréal's Expo 67 (the film takes place at Expo 70, held in Tokyo, a major letdown for all the characters and a signal, along with the October Crisis that is seen, in this film, in black and white images, that the giddiness of cultural awakening is over). Even his relatively straightforward films make use of odd aspects of Québec culture: *Le Polygraphe* (1996) takes place, like *Le Confessionale*, in Québec City, and makes the most of that city's distinctive urban landscape, and the English-language film *Possible Worlds* (2000) concludes with a very odd sequence on the Magdalene islands. It's possible to argue, of course, that *Le Polygraphe* and *Possible Worlds* only use these kinds of flourishes as superficial, semi-touristic window dressing.

This argument is harder to make in the case of *Le Confessionale* or *Nô*. These are films that seem more influenced by the visuality of avant-garde cinema (or of music video) than by the orality of Québec documentary, but that does not make them mutually exclusive with the idea of a distinct Québec cinema, one that is difficult to integrate into world cinema without some knowledge of political and cultural specifics. This is less true of a film like François Girard's *The Red Violin* (1999), which is similarly influenced by avant garde cinema and music video as opposed to rambling documentary, but which, as Brenda Longfellow has argued, ends up engulfed by the materialism and homogeneity that is all too common to globalised cultural forms. All this sounds very much, of course, like the arguments that I was making in chapter six about Denys Arcand and Neil Jordan, and I would come to a similar conclusion about Lepage. Just because Québec politics or cultural attributes are invoked (as they are in *Le Polygraphe*, or *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*) does not mean that the film is a substantial engagement with those political or cultural issues, and just because those issues are invoked more explicitly (as they are in *Jésus de Montréal*, *Le Confessionale* or *Nô*) does not mean that the film is provincial or narrowly nationalist. What we are seeing in Québec – and this is as embodied by Lepage as it is by younger filmmakers like André Turpin (*Zigrail* [1995], *Un crabe dans la tête* [2001]) or Denis Villeneuve (*Un 32 août sur terre* [1998], *Maelström* [2000]) or Jeanne Crépau (*Revoir Julie* [1999]) – is the emergence of a film making practice that is simultaneously locally rooted and globally aware.

Irish cinema is also changing in the face of a globalised cinema, and the last few years have seen the emergence of a *jeune cinéma* that would seem to offer a comparison with figures like Lepage, Turpin and Villeneuve. Filmmakers like Trish McAdam (*Snakes and Ladders* [1996]), Gerard Stembridge (*Guilttrip*

[1996], *About Adam* [2000]), and Paddy Breathnach (*Ailsa* [1994], *I Went Down* [1997], *Blow Dry* [2000]) are part of a group who, Ruth Barton has written, "[align] themselves with a type of independent film making largely associated with American and Australian cinemas. This has led them not just to embrace the visual aesthetics of bad taste but to explore, at a narrative level, the marginalised and otherwise under-represented sections of Irish society, focusing, in particular, on issues of gender and region" (195-6). Breathnach and Stembridge are particularly interesting examples. Breathnach's first film *Ailsa* is a brooding psychodrama about a Dublin man obsessed with a young American that certainly used Dublin's gloomy climate and Georgian architecture to great effect, but had no explicit engagement with Irish culture as such. I have already mentioned how Gibbons finds its visuality important, and while he links that visuality to films that are quite engaged with Irish culture, it seems to me that one of *Ailsa*'s real strengths is actually that it does not engage with Irish culture at all. When it was released in 1995, it seemed to announce the arrival of an Irish art cinema, confident enough about Irish identity to not be obsessed by it. There is a very similar sense to Stembridge's first feature *Guilttrip*, about a violent, obsessive and sexually repressed Army officer. Similarly, Gibbons asserts that "[t]hemes such as domestic violence are taken out of their more insular context and given a post-colonial inflection, if we are alert to the affinities between Gerry Stembridge's *Guilttrip*, Mike Winterbottom's/Roddy Doyle's *Family*, and Lee Tamahori's *Once Were Warriors*" (1996c:22), but as with Barton's invocation of American and Australian cinema, I find this analogy strained. Instead, I think these first films by young Irish filmmakers are more fruitfully linked with work like the *jeune cinéma* of Québec of roughly the same period. They are all formally innovative, and all are aware of the international implications of their work. Sometimes this awareness and innovation comes through narrative reference to other countries; we see this in *Zigrail*, *Un crabe dans la tête*, *Un août 32 sur terre* and *Ailsa*. More broadly, though, we see it implicitly, as an attempt to form a link between a European art cinema that is for the most part less political than what we see in the films I have discussed throughout this work but still raises interesting thematic questions (obsession with young women as an escape from a dreary existence in *Ailsa*, violent anger at the messiness of family life in *Guilttrip*).

As these filmmakers progressed in their careers, though, a very different picture of the kind of cinema they were trying to build emerged. Although following *Guilttrip,* Stembridge did some interesting work as a screenwriter (penning Pat Murphy's *Nora* [2000] and Thaddeus O'Sullivan's *Ordinary Decent Criminal* [2000]), his second film as a filmmaker was the BBC-produced, Bord-Scannán-na-hÉireann-funded romantic comedy *About Adam*. It also had very little to do with Ireland as such, and really had very little to do with *anything*; it is a featherweight comedy about a Lothario named Adam who sleeps with three sisters. Paddy Breathnach's next work was the ironic and self-conscious gangster film *I Went Down*; it made interesting use of the Irish landscape (the hero falls into a bog for no good reason; the car chases are conducted along insanely narrow roads) but this kind of imagery, like the gloomy Dublin of *Ailsa*, was subordinate to the narrative as such. The crucial difference there was that this narrative was basically derivative and circular; it wasn't so much *about* anything as it was about being a gangster film (although Martin McLoone has argued that "[t]he gangster element allows for a picture to emerge of the seedier side of the economic miracle" [1998:34]). Breathnach's next film after this was *Blow Dry*, a multinational production (Germany/UK/USA) set in England and obviously derivative of *Strictly Ballroom*; it took place in the world of competitive hairdressing. Although he has used the same cinematographer on all three films (which share a similar visual feel) there is a distinct sense that Breathnach's authorial identity is steadily diminishing as his career progresses. McLoone's assessment is somewhat more optimistic: he writes of Ailsa and *I Went Down* that "there is an exploration in the two films of film form itself, not in the avant garde traditions of the 1970s but in the context of a new film culture emerging under both American and European influences" (34). I take McLoone's point here, although I think that he is overstating somewhat the degree of formal experimentation that is going on in *I Went Down*, and by the time we get to *Blow Dry* (not yet produced when McLoone was writing) that sense of experimentation really has migrated fully into the realm of the derivative. There is a very similar sense about Gerard Stembridge's career as a director, and I don't get much sense of a distinct voice in Trish McAdam at all (her only film so far has been the sitcom-like *Snakes and Ladders*). So I would like to take this brief sketch of Ireland's *jeune cinéma* full circle and finally agree with Barton on the question of comparison. Although it started out the 1990s resembling Québec's complexly local and global emerging cinema, Irish film is beginning to morph into something very close to Australian and American independent cinema of the 1980s and 90s, both of which are marked by early bursts of innovation followed by a steady move towards Hollywood. We see can see parallels of this move in the United States, with the transformation of the once-independent Sundance Film Festival into a "farm club" for Hollywood filmmakers, and in Australia, with the phenomenon of its best filmmakers such as Peter Weir or Fred Schepisi leaving for Hollywood to make often quite vapid films, such as *Green Card* or *Mr Baseball*, respectively.

While I am sympathetic to calls for Irish cinema to lessen its obsession with realism and unresolved cultural problems (like the role of the church or the repressive nature of life in rural areas), I do not think that this path we see emerging embodies the most progressive or sustainable manifestation of that strategy. Godfrey Cheshire's statement on Irish cinema in *The Irish Times*, first delivered as an address to the 2001 Galway Film Fleadh, is especially important in this context. Calling for "more playfulness" in Irish cinema, he writes:

> I would say that politics, topicality and prosaic realism have generally been overvalued in Irish cinema, and that they threaten to keep that cinema from making its next creative leap. To put that another way, works of genre or imagination (ghost stories, romances, action films, say) here tend to be viewed as *inherently* commercial, i.e. frivolous, while realistic descriptions of social strife or family dysfunction are seen as *inherently* serious, worthy, artistic....
>
> Irish cinema is right now nearing a crossroads that will determine whether it simply continues to develop as an industry and cultural project or will grow as an art. To cite the most positive model of the latter I can think of, consider Italian cinema in the decades after World War II: Neorealism, which treated social problems in a realistic style, was followed by the great imaginative works of Fellini, Antonioni, Visconti, Bertolucci, et al., which came in such dazzling profusion from the late 1950s to the 1970s. That leap happened because the filmmakers didn't

> allow themselves to be shackled to the initial paradigm; they shifted their focus from "Italy" to "cinema," without at all abandoning the former. (9)

This is a highly compelling, utopic idea of the link between the global and the local, the aesthetic and the cultural. Indeed, it would be tempting at this juncture to say something like "I have been tracking a model based on Paul Willemen's concept of a marginalised political cinema, but I could have just as well spent this dissertation tracking Godfrey Cheshire's model of a locally rooted art cinema." I do not, however, really believe that I could have done that, not with Irish cinema, anyway. Indeed, this basic path that Cheshire tracks for Italian cinema can also be seen in *Québec* cinema; an early generation of filmmakers tends to earnestly deal with political or social-nationalist topics (Perrault Lefebvre, Arcand, Godbout), but a newer generation internalises those films and, without rejecting their cultural project altogether, focusses more intently on narrative and visual form (Lepage, Turpin, Villeneuve, Crépeau, although a similar argument could be made about older filmmaker such as Gilles Carle or André Forcier). The one place we are *not* seeing this path being followed, though, is Ireland; the post-emergence drift of the national cinema is towards Peter Weir, not Federico Fellini. This is, of course, a path that some of Italian cinema ended up following anyway, and Bernardo Bertolucci's move into international super-productions (such as *The Last Emperor* [1987]) and then Hollywood films (such as *Little Budda* [1993] or *Stealing Beauty* [1996]) provide excellent examples of how this early Italian ciné-utopia has radically changed course over the last few decades.

The Cheshire model presupposes a very open-minded, anti-hegemony-minded vision of internationalism; Kevin Rockett has argued that this is not at all what has emerged in a post-nationalist Ireland. Writing about his country's "Los Angelesation," he asserts that:

> Just as in the past economic and cultural protectionism was promoted as the means of saving the nation, so, too, in a complete reversal since the 1950s, has the embracing of foreign capital in Ireland been deemed the means whereby the nation is saved. What we see in this process is that the previous attempts to disguise our dependence on the metropolitan centres have been stripped away. And, while at earlier periods the Los Angelesation of Ireland was to be welcomed as a cultural liberation, such has not been the case in recent decades, as the repressive ideologies of Hollywood reinforce our own home grown ones.
> (1991:22)

Indeed, that liberation based on Los Angelesation is the subject of Thaddeus O'Sullivan's 1985 short film *The Woman Who Married Clark Gable.* Starring British actor Bob Hoskins and Brenda Fricker and based on a short story by Seán O'Faolain, it was about a woman who convinces her decidedly un-macho husband to grow a moustache and imitate Clark Gable, with who she becomes obsessed after a few too many weekends spent at the cinema. It was a comic, gentle evocation of the ways that people living in the dreary Ireland of the 1950s managed to find ways of escaping through fantasy, and it fits Cheshire's model quite well. It is gorgeously photographed in black and white, certainly does not abandon Ireland but is more centrally concerned with the very eccentric relationship that develops between Fricker and Hoskins. Similarly, Cheshire points to Neil Jordan's *The Butcher Boy* (1997) as a "gold standard" for Irish cinema precisely because of the way that it deals with the effects of Hollywood on the imagination in a way that is both specific to Ireland and quite universal. But I am not convinced that either one of these films is at all indicative of recent Irish cinema's relationship to Hollywood. Criticism or playful engagement is rare; imitation, complete with the full complement of repressive ideology that Rockett invokes, is settling in as a more standard model.

Indeed, closer to the mark is the talk of exile and financial need that Marie-Claude Loiselle has invoked in terms of the relationship between Québec cinema of the 1970s and the turn of the millennium. In her editorial for the Winter 2001 issue of *24 Images*, she criticised the English-language films *Stardom* (2000) by Denys Arcand and *Possible Worlds* (2000) by Lepage, comparing them with experiences that two highly respected Québec filmmakers, Claude Jutra and Francis Mankiewicz, had in making films in Toronto. The fact that both Jutra and Mankiewicz flopped in English and would both shortly thereafter die much too young speaks to a palatable melancholy floating below the surface of her analysis. She wonders at one point "peut-on, pour des raisons strictement commerciales, s'exiler bien longtemps de sa langue, de sa culture sans y perdre d'une autre manière... et peut-être bien davantage? C'est même possible que la disparition de Jutra et de Mankiewicz puisse nous en dire quelque chose... C'est qu'il y aura toujours une dose de pathétisme dans le fait de devoir en arriver à adopter la culture dominante pour survivre" (2000:3; ellipses hers) [can one, for strictly commercial reasons, exile one's self for very long from one's language, from one's culture without losing something else... and maybe even more? It's even possible that the disappearance of Jutra and Mankiewicz can tell us something... It's that there is always a dose of the pathetic in the fact of needing to adopt the dominant culture in order to survive]. Hollywood, of course, has a long history of immigrant filmmakers who evolve tremendously once they leave their homelands; Alfred Hitchcock is an excellent example, as is the generation of German filmmakers who left during or right after the Nazi rise to power, including Fritz Lang or Douglas Sirk. But we are two generations removed from these heroic narratives of emigrant directors who enrich Hollywood; the political and economic reasons for these kinds of migrations have changed completely. So I think that the experience of Irish and Québec filmmakers leaving home to work in richer cinematic climes is much closer to the Australia-in-the-80s model than to the Germany-in-the-40s one. Instead of an enhancement of Hollywood cinema by other cultures, what is shaking out is a dilution of the local cultural content in films from emerging cinemas (and this is true more of Ireland than Québec) that seems clearly connected to the need to either go somewhere else to make films (as Breathnach did with *Blow Dry*) or to have "somewhere else," which is to say Hollywood form, come to you (as I think we see with *About Adam*, *Snakes and Ladders*, or Fintan Connolly's *Miami-Vice*-like crime movie *Flick* [2000]). Jutra and Mankiewicz, like Denys Arcand (who has made *Love and Human Remains* [1993] and *Stardom* [2000], the first all in English, the second mostly in English), seemed to have done well enough in their careers to have made it into the "big time" of English-language production. While not wanting to indulge in too much crystal-ball work, I see an unfolding narrative of career advancement (Stembridge and Breathnach must be doing really well if they're making films in the UK now!)

with a payoff of alienation that is very similar to what has come to pass with Québec cinema's flirtations with English-language productions. Institutionally, this shift also means an increased reliance on multi-national media corporations with no particular cultural identity or cultural project, and a shift away from state-based organisations that, although they have potential problems with censorship, are generally constituted as *cultural* operations (as SOGIC and SODEC are, and as the second incarnation of the BSÉ is). This could be entirely mistaken, of course, since the crucial distinction between Québec and Irish cinema is that the latter has a significant cycle of films that both exist in a globalised, semi-Hollywood space and deal with local situations, however shallow-ly (and I have in mind here especially *The Crying Game*, which I discussed at length in chapter six, but also *In the Name of the Father* [Jim Sheridan, 1993] and *Some Mother's Son* [Terry George, 1996], and *The Boxer* [Sheridan, 1998], which I briefly discussed in the introduction).

I would make the overall argument, though, that these polemics have got their respective situations exactly backwards, and that this is actually a confirmation of my contention that Irish and Québec cinema make for a good comparison. What we see in both places are attempts to define a sustainable national cinema following a burst of initial creativity, a burst that was often linked to a political or nationalist project (numerous manifestations of which have been the topic of this work). In Ireland we are seeing an abandonment of a lot of this early idealism in favour of a move towards a commercialised, semi-Hollywood model and more easily globalised model. In Québec, I think we are seeing something very different, a kind of re-negotiation of that early idealism, in the form of something less explicitly political but still rooted in a local reality. So we have seen Québec critics decry a globalised shift that I think is more typical of Irish cinema, and critics interested in Irish cinema seem to be longing for a model that is hard to find in Ireland but alive and well and living in Montréal (with a little bit in Québec City as well). What I think it is important to keep in mind is that both Québec and Irish cinema *began* in very similar socio-cultural spaces. From an early cycle of basically domestically-oriented feature and documentary films, they experienced a long dry spell, gradually developed the infrastructure necessary to sustain a steady output of feature films, and began a long "middle period" of film making that was notable for the significant amount of work that seemed to be neither fish nor fowl, neither entirely commercial nor entirely avant-garde, seldom militant but often engaged with political realities. That they should continue to be defined by similar issues even as they begin to significantly diverge is an indication that they share a great deal. And the act of finding such "minor cinemas" and teasing out the similarities – in institutional structure, or in shared ambiguities around form, politics, or ideology – seems to me an important part of writing film history at the turn of the century. I discussed in the introduction and in chapter seven how easy it is to try to collapse Irish or Québec cinema into categories such as "art cinema," "kind of like the French New Wave, but, you know, North American" or "kind of like British cinema, but, you know, Irish" and how much of a mistake that is. Even as they begin to diverge, I think that Irish and Québec cinema continue to defy these kinds of categorisations. As some of the sacred institutions of world cinema – easily demarcated national cinemas, the boundary between film and television, the boundary between commercial and non-commercial production – begin to disintegrate, I think it is more important than ever to take careful notice of this kind of defiance.

Filmography

Chapter One:

***Le Révolutionnaire* (Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, Québec, 1965, 16mm, 73 mins):** A group of young Québec revolutionaries engage in military training at their country hideout in the middle of winter; their unnamed leader is fanatic and hyper-militarist. Eventually, they are all killed by an unseen enemy. There are several sequences that are outside the narrative as such, including one where actors absurdly re-enact battles between Natives and colonisers and the French and the English and which features scratching-on-film. **Print Source:** Cinémathèque Québécois. 335 boul. de Maisonneuve Est. Montréal, Québec H2X 1K1, Canada. Phone: 514.842.9763.

***Mon amie Pierette* (Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, Québec, 1968, 16mm, 69 mins):** A young man named Yves goes to the eastern townships to visit his friend Pierrette, on whom he has a crush. There he meets her conservative parents and her philosopher/artist friend Raoul. Raoul engages in good-natured arguments with Pierette's parents, and Yves tries to suss out it Pierette has any feelings for him. The film ends as Pierrette and Yves are driving to Montréal together; they pass Raoul hitchhiking, Yves refuses to stop for him, and Pierette seems to decide not to be with Yves or Raoul. **Print Source:** National Film Board of Canada / Office National du Film du Canada. 3155 Côte-de-Liesse, St.-Laurent, Québec H4N 2N4, Canada. Phone: 514.283.9800.

***Jusqu'au cœur* (Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, Québec, 1968, 16mm, 93 mins):** A politically-minded man named Garou is brainwashed by an unknown, vaguely governmental force and experiences a series of colourfully photographed by extremely violent hallucinations. This fragmented narrative is cross-cut with images of Garou's alienated existence in Montréal. The film concludes with images of animated American jets and sounds of terrible explosions. **Print Source:** National Film Board of Canada / Office National du Film du Canada. 3155 Côte-de-Liesse, St.-Laurent, Québec H4N 2N4, Canada. Phone: 514.283.9800.

***Les Dernières fiançailles* (Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, Québec, 1973, 16mm, 92 mins):** An elderly man is very sick and seems to be nearing the end of his life. His existence in rural Québec with his wife is evoked in a series of slow-moving tableaux, and at the conclusion of the film two white-clad angels descend and seem to take the man off. **Print Source:** Cinema Libre. 460 rue Sainte-Catherine Ouest. Montréal, Québec H3B 1A7, Canada. Phone: 514.861.9030.

***Les Fleurs sauvages* (Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, Québec, 1981, 16mm, 152 mins):** An elderly woman named Simone goes to visit her daughter Michèle, a sculptor living in the country with her husband Pierre and her two kids from a previous marriage. There are some minor disagreements over lifestyle and child-raising, and a sense of generational non-understanding is present throughout the visit.

Print Source: Cinema Libre. 460 rue Sainte-Catherine Ouest. Montréal, Québec H3B 1A7, Canada. Phone: 514.861.9030.

Chapter Two:

***Pour la suite du monde* (Pierre Perrault and Michel Brault, Québec, 1963, 16mm, 105 mins):** A documentary in which a group of filmmakers travels to l'Île-aux-Coudres, a small island in the St. Laurence river, and convince the islanders to revive an old method of porpoise-hunting. There is much discussion of the hunt and of other traditions on the island. The complex method of the hunt is documented in considerable detail, and at the end the islanders deliver the porpoise they have caught to an aquarium in New York. **Print Source:** National Film Board of Canada / Office National du Film du Canada. 3155 Côte-de-Liesse, St.-Laurent, Québec H4N 2N4, Canada. Phone: 514.283.9800.

***Le Règne du jour* (Pierre Perrault, Québec, 1967, 16mm, 118 mins):** A documentary in which Léopold Tremblay and his parents, Alexis and Marie-Paule, travel to France to visit their Norman ancestors. Perrault cross-cuts between France and Québec, and this montage gives a sense of considerable disconnection between the two cultures. Alexis is the most interested in the historical connections, and the closing images are of him back on l'Île-aux-Coudres with a grandfather clock that he brought back from France. **Print Source:** National Film Board of Canada / Office National du Film du Canada. 3155 Côte-de-Liesse, St.-Laurent, Québec H4N 2N4, Canada. Phone: 514.283.9800.

***Un pays sans bon sens!* (Pierre Perrault, Québec, 1970, 16mm, 117 mins):** An essayistic documentary that examines different notions of "pays." Organised around the image of the family album and divided into three parts ("L'Appartenance à l'album," "Le Refus de l'album" and "Le Retour à l'album"), it has a diverse cast of characters, including a Franco-Albertan living in Paris, a group of Bretons in France, a family of Huron living on Sept-Îles, a group of lumberjacks, and René Lévesque travelling to Manitoba to explain separatism to English-Canada. Many of these sequences are linked by Didier Dufour, a scientist who sees the behaviour of mice as a metaphor for Québec history. **Print Source:** National Film Board of Canada / Office National du Film du Canada. 3155 Côte-de-Liesse, St.-Laurent, Québec H4N 2N4, Canada. Phone: 514.283.9800.

***L'Acadie, L'Acadie ?!?* (Pierre Perrault and Michel Brault, Québec, 1971, 16mm, 117 mins):** A documentary that covers the student protests at l'Université de Moncton, the first French-medium university in New Brunswick. The film is broken into a number of parts that are separated by titles made up of newspaper clippings. Topics covered include the occupation of the buildings by the students, their testimony before the Moncton City Council, and their discussions about what they imagine life in Québec to be like and how different it must be to live in a province with a Francophone majority. **Print Source:** National Film Board of Canada / Office National du Film du Canada. 3155 Côte-de-Liesse, St.-Laurent, Québec H4N 2N4, Canada. Phone: 514.283.9800.

***Poitín* (Bob Quinn, Republic of Ireland, 1977, 16mm, 75 mins):** An old poitín-maker has two sellers in his employ. When some of his poitín is confiscated by the police, the henchmen steal it back and try to sell it for themselves. They then confront the distiller, try to rape his daughter, and are eventually undone when he tricks them into going out onto the lake in a leaky boat and they drown. In Irish, with English subtitles. **Print Source:** Museum of Modern Art Circulating Film Library. 11 West 53rd Street, New York, New York 10019, USA. Phone: 212.708.9530.

***Atlantean* (Bob Quinn, Republic of Ireland, 1983, 16mm/video, 3 parts of 60 minutes each):** A documentary on the possible North African and Middle-Eastern roots of the Irish. Bob Quinn is at the centre of the investigations, and he travels to Morocco and Egypt, and also interviews scientists and museum experts in Ireland. Special points of contact are the shared reliance on the Atlantic, similarities in sail design, and linguistic affinities between Irish and Arabic. **Print Source:** Irish Film Archive. 6 Eustace Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2, Republic of Ireland. Phone: 353.1.679.5744.

***Pobal í London: Flytippers* (Bob Quinn, Republic of Ireland, 1987, 16mm and Video, 56 mins):** A documentary about a group of men from Connemara, now living in England and working on construction sights, making extra money by illegally dumping construction waste (a practice known as "flytipping"). Features interviews with the men (who we hear speak only in Irish) and with London City Council officials, who hold forth on how much trouble such muck-dumping causes. **Print Source:** Bob Quinn, Cinegael. Tuairín, Béal an Daingin, Conamara, Éire. Phone: 353.91.572.591.

The Bishop's Story (Bob Quinn, Republic of Ireland, 1993, 35mm, 85 mins): An elderly priest, in a home for alcoholic clergy, remembers his days as the priest on Clare Island. While he was there, a young woman who he had helped when she was a junkie in London came to see him again. He took her in as his housekeeper, they fell in love and she became pregnant by him. The villagers seemed not terribly bothered by this, but the Bishop on Galway was enraged. She eventually left the island without him. The sequences in the drying-out home are in English and in black and white; the sequences on the island are in Irish with English inter-titles, and are sepia-toned. The film was previously shot in 16mm and in English and released as *Budawanny* (1987); it was re-organised, dubbed into Irish, and blown up to 35mm for this version. **Print Source:** Irish Film Archive. 6 Eustace Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2, Republic of Ireland. Phone: 353.1.679.5744.

Chapter Three:

Un monologue Nord-Sud **(Jacques Godbout, Québec, 1982, 16mm, 57 mins):** An essayistic documentary about the way that the United States dominates the Americas, both culturally and economically. Moves between Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and Durmmondville, Québec. Focusses specifically on tourism and on unions, and also spends much time on the mining of bauxite. **Print Source:** National Film Board of Canada / Office National du Film du Canada. 3155 Côte-de-Liesse, St.-Laurent, Québec H4N 2N4, Canada. Phone: 514.283.9800.

Comme en Californie **(Jacques Godbout, Québec, 1983, 16mm, 80 mins):** An essayistic documentary about the culture of California. Features a long section on the film industry, including an interview with Pierre David, who used to produce films in Québec but now works for Universal. Also has sections on New Age philosophy, meditation, computer technology, and jogging. Considers that way that Californian ideology has influenced Québec culture. **Print Source:** National Film Board of Canada / Office National du Film du Canada. 3155 Côte-de-Liesse, St.-Laurent, Québec H4N 2N4, Canada. Phone: 514.283.9800.

Alias Will James **(Jacques Godbout, Québec, 1988, 16mm, 83 mins):** A documentary that examines the life of Ernest Dufault, alias Will James, whose books and paintings tremendously influenced the image of "the old west." Features long descriptions of Dufault's life after leaving Québec for Montana, interviews with Dufault's descendants, and also with Québécois who are making their living on the rodeo circuit. Comes to the conclusion that as Dufault began to re-invent himself, he began to lose a sense of self; features images of the last letters he wrote home, in an incomprehensible mish-mash of English and French. **Print Source:** National Film Board of Canada / Office National du Film du Canada. 3155 Côte-de-Liesse, St.-Laurent, Québec H4N 2N4, Canada. Phone: 514.283.9800.

Route 66 **(John T. Davis, Northern Ireland, 1985, 16mm, 104 mins):** A documentary that examines the decay of towns along the legendary American highway. Features a soundtrack of 1950s and 60s pop music, and semi-re-enacted sequences that try to explain the mystique of the road. It is both romantic and gritty, clearly enamoured of the freedom that the open road represents, but also giving a palatable sense of melancholy about the fate of the rural United States. **Print Source:** Irish Film Archive. 6 Eustace Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2, Republic of Ireland. Phone: 353.1.679.5744.

Power in the Blood **(John T. Davis, Northern Ireland, 1989, 16mm, 76 mins):** A documentary portrait of Vernon Oxford, a country-and-western singer from Tennessee who goes to Northern Ireland to visit his friend Wilfie Cummings, a Loyalist prisoner in Long Kesh. Once there, he feels a tremendous kinship with the music he hears, and eventually performs for Long Kesh's Prison Officer's Country Music Society. **Print Source:** Irish Film Archive. 6 Eustace Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2, Republic of Ireland. Phone: 353.1.679.5744.

Dust on the Bible **(John T. Davis, Northern Ireland, 1989, 16mm, 52 mins):** An documentary about fundamentalist Christianity and its impact on the culture of Northern Ireland. Focusses particularly on rural Northern Ireland, and on the countless small churches that dot the countryside. Argues that funamentalist, for better or for worse, is an absolutely central part of the distinct culture of Northern Ireland. **Print Source:** Irish Film Archive. 6 Eustace Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2, Republic of Ireland. Phone: 353.1.679.5744.

Chapter Four:

Les Ordres **(Michel Brault, Québec, 1974, 16mm, 109 mins):** A multi-character drama about those rounded up during the October Crisis of 1970, when Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau declared martial law to deal with the terrorist campaign of the Front de Liberation du Québec (FLQ). Centres around a union organiser, his wife, a socialist candidate for office who is also a doctor, an out-of-work activist, and a social worker, all of whom are arrested with no charge and held in prison. Also features interviews with the actors, both in character and "in real life," as actors. Switches between colour and black and white. **Print Source:** Cinémathèque Québécois. 335 boul. de Maisonneuve Est. Montréal, Québec H2X 1K1, Canada. Phone: 514.842.9763.

Maeve **(Pat Murphy, Northern Ireland, 1981, 16mm, 90 mins):** Centres around Maeve, a young woman who returns to Belfast after living in London for several years. The film is episodic, with no clear narrative progression, and deal with Maeve's frustration with both the oppressive nature of the British Army's occupation of Northern Ireland and with the sexist nature of Irish nationalism. Features several sequences that split the sound and the image. Conclusion is a sequence with Maeve, her sister and her mother at the Giant's Causeway. **Print Source:** Irish Film Archive. 6 Eustace Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2, Republic of Ireland. Phone: 353.1.679.5744.

Chapter Five:

On est au coton **(Denys Arcand, Québec, 1970 [released 1976], 16mm, 159 mins):** A documentary about cotton mills in eastern Québec. It focusses especially on the long-term health hazards faced by the workers (such as respiratory disease), the constant noise, the poor pay, and the place of the cotton industry in Québec's economy. **Print Source:** National Film Board of Canada /

Office National du Film du Canada. 3155 Côte-de-Liesse, St.-Laurent, Québec H4N 2N4, Canada. Phone: 514.283.9800.

***La Maudite galette* (Denys Arcand, Québec, 1972, 16mm, 100 mins):** Centres around Ernest, who gets caught up in a murder-and-theft plot gone wrong. When the couple he is boarding with tried to kill an uncle with whom they had a dispute over money, Ernest kills the everyone involved with the plot, and runs off with the money and the wife, Berthe. Print Source: **Print Source:** Cinema Libre. 460 rue Sainte-Catherine Ouest. Montréal, Québec H3B 1A7, Canada. Phone: 514.861.9030.

***Réjeanne Padovani* (Denys Arcand, Québec, 1973, 35mm, 96 mins):** Tells the story of a night in the life of a group of Montréal politicians and gangsters, whose business dealings are all interconnected. The title character is the wife of Vincent Padovani, a mafia kingpin who has forbidden her from showing her face in the city again. The film has a kind of "upstairs-downstairs" theme, with the politicians and businessmen having a formal dinner at Padovani's home and their bodyguards and mistresses waiting for them to finish in the basement "rumpus room." **Print Source:** Cinémathèque Québécois. 335 boul. de Maisonneuve Est. Montréal, Québec H2X 1K1, Canada. Phone: 514.842.9763.

***Gina* (Denys Arcand, Québec, 1975, 35mm, 95 mins):** A group of filmmakers from the "Office Nationale du Cinéma" is dispatched to Lennoxville, Québec to make a film about the cotton mills there. At the same time, a stripper is coming up having been sent by her gangland boss from Montreal to dance at a bar there, and is on the same train as the head of gang of ruffian snowmobilers, who has just secured a "local development grant" that will keep him and his pals through the winter. The documentary they are producing eventually encounters problems identical to those faced by *On est au coton* (clips from which are integrated into the film). After Gina is raped by the snowmobilers, her gangland bosses come up to seek bloody revenge. **Print Source:** Cinémathèque Québécois. 335 boul. de Maisonneuve Est. Montréal, Québec H2X 1K1, Canada. Phone: 514.842.9763.

***Our Boys* (Cathal Black, Republic of Ireland, 1981, 16mm, 40 mins):** A documentary about the abuse of young boys at schools run by the Christian Brothers. The film mixes archival footage of the 1932 Eucharistic Congress in Dublin, interviews with Priests and with men who were abused as boys by Brothers, and re-enacted sequences that tell the story of a school being shut down after allegations of brutality. **Print Source:** Cathal Black Films. 161 Monalea Grove, Firhouse, Dublin 24, Republic of Ireland. Phone: 353.1.494.7120.

***Pigs* (Cathal Black, Republic of Ireland, 35mm, 1984, 35mm, 75 mins):** Centres on a giant house in Dublin where a group of misfits squat together. Jimmy, a gay divorcé, is running a minor welfare scam to keep everyone. The film centres around the strained dynamics that develop between them. **Print**

Source: Cathal Black Films. 161 Monalea Grove, Firhouse, Dublin 24, Republic of Ireland. Phone: 353.1.494.7120.

***Korea* (Cathal Black, Republic of Ireland, 35mm, 1995, 75 mins):** Set in County Cavan, it tells the story of John Doyle, an embittered fisherman who fought with the Fénians in the Civil War, and his prosperous, pro-modernising (and pro-tourism) neighbour Ben Moran, who fought with the Free-Staters. When Moran's son is killed fighting with the Americans in Korea, he gets a huge check from the US government; this increases Doyle's resentment. When Doyle's son falls in love with Moran's daughter, the problems become greater still. **Print Source:** Cathal Black Films. 161 Monalea Grove, Firhouse, Dublin 24, Republic of Ireland. Phone: 353.1.494.7120.

***Love and Rage* (Cathal Black, Republic of Ireland, 35mm, 1999, 100 mins):** Set on Achill Island, the film centres around a wealthy, liberal landowner named Agnes MacDonnell, and a man named Linehan with whom she falls in love. Linehan has a shadowy past, although seems to be a con man with some tenuous connections to the IRB (who he thinks are a bunch of buffoons). The relationship ends quite violently, with Linehan beating MacDonnell, then fleeing to the United States where he is hailed as a political dissident. **Print Source:** J&M Entertainment, 5 Percy Street, London W1T 1DG, England. Phone: 44.207.467.6880.

Chapter Six:

***Le Déclin de l'empire américain* (Denys Arcand, Québec, 35mm, 1986, 101 mins):** Centres around a group of Montréal academics, who all meet for a dinner party at one of their homes in the Eastern Townships. They talk almost only about sex, and clearly have lost whatever youthful idealism that they once had (and to which they occasionally elude). **Print Source:** MaloFilm. 3735 boul. St-Laurent, Montréal, Québec H2T 1R8, Canada. Phone: 514.844.4555.

***Jésus de Montréal* (Denys Arcand, Québec, 35mm, 1989, 118 mins):** A group of Montreal actors, working in a wide variety of "day jobs," decide to stage an innovative, outdoor production of the passion play, under the sponsorship of a priest with whom one of the actresses is sleeping. The actor playing Christ, Daniel, grows increasingly angry at the crass commercialism of Montréal culture, at one point smashing the equipment at a commercial shoot. At the end he dies after an accident during the production, although his organs are given to people all over the city. **Print Source:** MaloFilm. 3735 boul. St-Laurent, Montréal, Québec H2T 1R8, Canada. Phone: 514.844.4555.

***The Crying Game* (Neil Jordan, Republic of Ireland, 35mm, 1992, 112 mins):** An IRA cell kidnaps a British soldier, who is then accidentally killed during a rescue attempt. One of the members of the cell, Fergus, is consumed with guilt, and so goes to London to try to find the soldier's girlfriend, Dil. This he does, although they quickly fall in love. Dil turns out to be a man, and the IRA cell turns out to want Fergus to do one more assassination, leading Fergus to try to take drastic measures to protect Dil and get himself out of the IRA orbit once and for all. **Print Source:** Miramax Films. 11 Beach Street, New York, New York 10013.

***Michael Collins* (Neil Jordan, Republic of Ireland, 35mm, 1996, 133 mins)**: Tells the story of Michael Collins, a leader in Ireland's War of Independence. Beginning at the Easter Rising of 1916, we follow Collins' development in the ranks of the IRA, and his eventual role in the treaty negotiations that lead to the Free State of Ireland and the Irish Civil War. There is also a love-story subplot, with Kitty Kiernan and Collins' comrade-in-arms Harry Boland forming the sides of a romantic triangle. Collins is assassinated by anti-treaty forces at the end, and Jordan shows a quivering Eammon de Valera, by that time fighting against the Free-Staters in the civil war, looking on and presumably complicit. **Print Source:** Warner Brothers.

Chapter Seven:

***Hush-A-Bye-Baby* (Margo Harkin, Northern Ireland, 35mm, 1989, 72 mins):** Set in the nationalist community of Derry in 1984, this film centres around Goretti, a 15-year old girl. She develops a crush on and has sex once with Ciaran, who is shortly thereafter rounded up and interned. She learns she is pregnant and experiences a tremendous sense of isolation and shame, as a debate over an abortion referendum rages in the Republic and she sees the difficult lives of single mothers all around her. The end of the film is ambiguous, with Goretti waking up after a nightmare involving the Virgin Mary, after trying to induce an abortion. **Print Source:** Besom Productions, 25 Ferryquay Street, Derry BT48 6JB, Northern Ireland. Phone: 44.2871.370.303.

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